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# Drunken Sailors and Fallen Women

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The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

# Drunken Sailors and Fallen Women

*The New London Whaling Industry and Prostitution, 1820 -1860*

An Honor's Thesis presented by

Eve Southworth

to The History Department in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for Honors in the  
Major Field

*Connecticut College/ New London, Connecticut/ April 2005*

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## *Introduction*

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The waterfront of New London, Connecticut, teemed with commerce during the thirty years prior to the Civil War. Steamships ferried to and from New York City, fishermen sold their catches daily on the parade of State Street, ships traveled to the West Indies trading goods, and whalers embarked on voyages lasting for years to bring back as much whale oil as their holds could support.<sup>1</sup> When a whaler arrived, throngs of people greeted the vessel, hoping that their loved ones, friends, and acquaintances had survived the voyage. As seamen disembarked, those from New London met relatives and friends they had left behind. Much of the crew, however, arrived in New London without family or friends to greet them. Some men had originally come to New London specifically to find employment on whalers. Others had been hired during whaling voyages in places such as the Cape Verdes Islands, setting foot in New London for the first time upon debarkation. Coming to New London with the hard earned money from a three- to four-year voyage, men, local and stranger, looked to spend it on temporary housing, food, entertainment, and women, even if they had to pay for the privilege.

Mary Lopez operated one popular boardinghouse for transient whalemen in New London during the 1830s to 1850s.<sup>2</sup> An African American herself, the men and women who rented rooms from her were also Black, reflecting the strenuous race relations of the era that resulted in Whites feeling most comfortable living in boardinghouses run by their own race. In 1840, Lopez not only rented rooms to seamen, but women as well. These women were most likely prostitutes because they lived in the same building as sailors, and Lopez was later arrested for operating a brothel. The location of the prostitutes' rooms gave them easy access

to customers. By the end of the 1840s, New London's population and illicit businesses had grown, causing New London's tolerance for prostitution to be sorely tested. The New London Justice of the Peace arrested Mary Lopez in 1849, and sent her to be tried before the County Court, rather than just the town court, as was customary until 1847. The court argued that Mary "did keep and maintain a house of bawdy and ill fame resorted to by lewd persons of both sexes for the purpose of prostitution" and that she resided in the brothel as well "for the purposes of prostitution." Mary pled guilty to being a madam and a prostitute, and the justice sentenced her to spend the next six months in the county jail in Norwich, Connecticut. She also received a fine of fifty dollars. Although the New London's legal system succeeded in removing Mary from her business for six months, she reopened her establishment upon her release on the riverfront thoroughway, Bank Street. Mary's boarding house was near the Custom's House, making her establishment very accessible to seamen fresh off the boats. Married three times while operating her brothels, her husbands may have been her business partners or taken a share of the profits. It is known that her last husband, James Lee, was a seaman, leaving Mary plenty of time to continue her illegal endeavors during his time away.<sup>3</sup>

Mary Lopez's experience as a prostitute and madam in New London reflected the opportunities and challenges faced by people working in the sex industry during New London's whaling years. New London's sailortown, the neighborhood frequented by seamen, provided a lucrative environment for women and some men to manage and or participate in prostitution.<sup>4</sup> While providing other services for seamen such as room and board, entrepreneurs such as Mary Lopez found it profitable to also rent rooms to prostitutes, providing sex services on the premises. New London taverns provided a space for women to solicit customers. Brothels were also a popular way to manage prostitution in New London.

Because New London was a small city, it provided little variety in the types of prostitutes it offered. In larger cities, in addition to working class prostitutes and streetwalkers, courtesans escorted the wealthy to the theater, men kept mistresses in fancy apartments, and luxurious brothels catered to the elite. In New London, prostitutes simply worked to survive. New London's story is not about excessive wealth and dreams of luxury. It concerns working-class women whose customers were common sailors who spent all their earnings on sex and alcohol. In cosmopolitan cities, dreams of marrying a rich gentleman could come true, although very rarely. In contrast, the best marriage a prostitute in New London could achieve was to a common whaleman.

Struggling to get by, barely able to pay fines that New London courts forced upon them, New London prostitutes were the female counterparts to transient, hardworking seaman. Both types of people lived on the margins of society, lived off of the wages of the sea, were distant from families, experienced comfort and violence among their fellow workers, drank and frequented taverns, caught venereal diseases, lived hazardous lives, and had illicit sexual affairs. Even with all this common ground, Victorians blamed the prostitutes for the excess and debauchery of both sexes. Prostitutes were charged with legal offenses while seamen left port to earn more money to fuel the prostitution industry of seaports. While seamen who bought sex could possibly take their earnings and work on family farms or start businesses after a few years of sailing, prostitutes, who sold sex, had little opportunity to escape their work. Victorians viewed men and women differently for committing the same act. The blame for sexual deviance was the woman's, and the man was seen as simply misguided.



Previous studies on Victorian era sex industries in America and England have focused on the lives of prostitutes, and their customers in large cities. These cities have a plethora of sources including city records, diaries, newspaper articles, and sociological studies from the time period. For example, American historians have done extensive studies on nineteenth-century prostitution in New York City, which had the largest population of prostitutes in America during this time period. Studies such as Timothy Gilfoyle's *City of Eros: New York City: Prostitution and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920*, Marilyn Wood Hill's *Their Sister's Keepers: Prostitution in New York City, 1830-1870*, or Christine Stansell's book *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York 1789- 1860* utilize the rich resources of New York to build histories of Victorian prostitution which involved people from all classes. The sex industry attracted customers from various professions, especially young men working alone in the city. In this sense, prostitution was the result of urbanization. Other cities in America extensively studied are New Orleans, San Francisco, and St. Paul, each with histories similar and different to New London.

Specific studies of prostitution and its link to seafaring Atlantic world are less common. David Cordingly produced a chapter, "Women on the Waterfront" in his book *Women Sailors and Sailor's Women: An Untold Maritime History*. Focusing on London, Cordingly found that many prostitutes and seamen developed long-term relationships and even married. Most other studies concerning seaports and prostitution mention the relationship between prostitutes and seamen only as part of larger work. In major cities such as New York, New Orleans, and London, so many other types of people utilized the services of prostitutes that the unique relationship between seamen and sex workers is often a reduced to a small part of the entire nineteenth-century story of prostitution.

Because New London's major industry in the Victorian era was whaling, this port is a rich location to study the relationship between maritime America and prostitution. New London and prostitution share a long history stretching from the colonial period to the present. Between the 1830s and 1840s, when this study begins, organized prostitution developed in New London. Unlike larger port cities, New London had very little industry that was not related to shipping, whaling, or the fisheries. Prostitution, therefore, serviced mostly people in the maritime industries. By 1840, New London was home to the largest number of seamen in Connecticut. The percentage of men in New London involved specifically in navigation of the oceans and rivers, not including people who ran auxiliary industries such as ship outfitting, was 17% of its total population. New Bedford, the largest whaling port of the time, only had 12% of its population involved in navigation of the oceans and rivers.<sup>5</sup> Although New London was a smaller port than New Bedford, most of its manpower was invested in whaling while New Bedford diversified slightly into other industries. New London's lack of economic diversity meant that most of its work force supported whaling in some way, including the sex workers.

This thesis begins by exploring the dichotomy between how middle-class Victorians treated women and men for participating in the sex industry. While Victorians attempted to reform seamen and protect them from the pitfalls of sailortown, they blamed prostitutes for luring men into illicit sexual encounters. In New London, rather than attempting to reform prostitutes through benevolence work, middle-class Victorians utilized the legal system to check the prostitution industry. An analysis of laws and court cases against prostitutes

provides insight into Victorian views on sexuality and the growth of the New London prostitution industry.

Chapter 2 explores role of seamen as sex consumers. Much of the information for this chapter is derived from the analysis of sea shanties. These work and leisure songs sung aboard ships depicted sailors' images of prostitutes. Whereas Victorians saw prostitutes as morally degraded, seamen often considered the actions of prostitutes before placing harsh judgments.

Chapter 3 examines the lives of women and men working in New London as brothel managers or prostitutes. These marginalized workers led multi-layered lives that did not fully reflect the viewpoints of Victorians or seamen. Developing their own community, this workforce lived outside Victorian norms. The stories of specific individuals are woven together from town court records and vital statistics. Unfortunately for this analysis, the papers left by many New Londoners are silent on the subject of prostitution. Because of the small amount of written evidence in New London, it is hard to have the same level of certainty about conclusions as studies about larger cities. Nonetheless, some themes are the same, making other studies useful in filling in the details of prostitution in a small seaport community.

Ultimately, this study seeks to answer questions concerning the nature of nineteenth-century maritime prostitution and the lives of the people involved. How did the sexual mores of seamen and prostitutes mesh with stricter middle-class Victorian sexual constructs? How did seamen view prostitutes and vice versa? Were the encounters between prostitutes and seamen just physical, or was their emotional involvement as well? Why did women become prostitutes? How did the reality of prostitute's lives compare to middle-class ideas of fallen

women? How was prostitution different in a large city versus a small seaport? The answers to these questions should shed light into inquires of the relationship between seamen and prostitutes during the age of sail.

# 1

## The Double Standard: Victorian Views of Sexuality and its Effects on Gender Roles and Prostitution

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The clearly delineated gender roles for men and women during the Victorian era influenced the way seamen and women defined their identities. Mainstream society chastised and tried to reform those who transgressed the dominant sexual norms. This chapter discusses the place of the common prostitute, the antithesis of the domestic goddess ideal, in Victorian society. Women who shamed their gender by having illicit sex were dubbed as “fallen,” a label almost impossible to escape. Seen as a problem themselves rather than victims of society, in the Victorian mind, prostitutes preyed on seamen and young, impressionable men. Reform movements before the Civil War nonetheless, neglected to address prostitution with the exception of a few vocal organizations and individuals. Reformers instead focused their efforts on saving seamen from the moral snares of sailortown - - alcohol, gambling, and prostitution. Prostitutes were either viewed as part of the criminal element of society, or simply ignored by reformers. New London is an example of a seaport that took legal steps to address prostitution while attempting to curb the vice of seamen through charitable reform movements.

During the Victorian era, female sexual purity became entangled with ideals concerning women's roles in public and private, creating a single definition of what a woman should be. After the American Revolution, reformers defined the role of men in society as participatory citizens in the public democracy. Women had power over domestic issues, and were expected to refrain from public discourse.<sup>6</sup> By the 1830s, the "cult of domesticity" had developed, further ensuring that a woman's place was in the home.<sup>7</sup> With the rise of industrialization and urbanization in the first half of the century, many people felt morals were declining in public and among loved ones. Women, as domestic angels, became the moral guardians of society and potential problem solvers. *The New London Gazette and General Advertiser* on October 17, 1838, informed women that they:

...must deteriorate or improve man's character...must diminished or increase his happiness...according to the moral and intellectual elevation or degradation of womenry. Thus, upon her improvement depends human improvement in general. Tell them to think more of their sex and less of themselves...and more of the cause of universal humanity than either...and the follies of flirtation and all blasphemies against their own power, their own privilege that of perfecting the moral happiness and intellectual character of human nature.<sup>8</sup>

While men went out into the potentially immoral world to earn a living, women turned the home into a haven for morality. When a husband returned from work, which, in a seamen's case, could take years, it was a woman's role to remind him of how he should behave.

Victorians also discouraged good women from sexual indiscretion, which at the time, included pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, and excessive sexual expression with their own husbands. Because society and doctors thought that women had less sexual desire than men, the public expected women to sexually restrain both genders.<sup>9</sup>

Middle-class Victorian society tended to oversimplify women's morality. Those seen as immoral faced severe consequences. A woman was either a good wife and daughter, or a

morally depraved outcast. Shannon Bell explains in *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* that nineteenth-century society viewed women as either, “good girl/bad girl, Madonna/whore, normal/abnormal, licit/illicit, wife/prostitute.”<sup>10</sup> Once a woman defied sexual moral standards, Victorians labeled her in the negatively, making her a social exile. There was little room for redemption. Women who had potential opportunities for good marriages tried desperately to adhere to middle-class standards to avoid being labeled as depraved. Rumors of illegitimate sex could ruin a woman’s reputation and therefore her chances for remarriage, legitimate employment, or receiving money from charities. For instance, New London’s Lewis Female Cent Society only gave financial support to the virtuous poor, excluding women with negative sexual reputations.<sup>11</sup>

Fear of falling and the consequences permeated the minds of women who hoped to remain in respectable society. Elizabeth Smith, raising her child without the father, took great lengths to dispel the rumor that she bore an illegitimate child. She printed evidence in the *New London Gazette and General Advertiser* in 1838 that proved she had been married when she conceived her child. She threatened those who accused her of illicit sex saying, “And I caution all tattlers and gossips against issuing, promulgating, or otherwise giving currency to the base slanders of the busy bodies of Poverty Hill.” Accusing a woman of sexual transgressions could be used to expel her from society. Early in the nineteenth century, if a man wanted to divorce his wife, he only had to call her a slut or an adulteress. Society’s fear of illicit sex was so strong that it took little to prove a woman’s guilt and ruin her life.<sup>12</sup>

Victorian intolerance for female sexual indiscretion and low work wages for women contributed to why women became prostitutes. The poverty that women experienced after

committing a sexual crime, because of family and spousal abandonment, led to the need to resort to prostitution for income. Employers were unwilling to hire “fallen” women, and chances for marriage dropped significantly. Impoverished women, regardless of sexual purity, resorted to prostitution to earn a living wage. Legitimate work opportunities did not often provide women with enough income because employers expected women to have a man in their family who brought home a significant salary. For women who needed to support themselves and/or a family, legitimate wages were not sufficient. Although many prostitutes hated their profession, there were a number of women who enjoyed the lifestyle. Women who took pleasure in more sexual freedom and or independence sometimes became prostitutes because it allowed them access to alcohol, sex, and money. Today, women can be more sexual expressive without the extreme social stigmatism that would force women to become prostitutes.<sup>13</sup>

Between 1820 and 1860, the vast majority of middle-class people viewed prostitutes as hopelessly lost creatures who ruined themselves by violating sexual standards. Londoner William Acton summed up the prevailing view in his report, *Prostitution Considered in Its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects in London and Other Large Cities and Garrison Towns* in 1857. He described his view of prostitutes in three parts, “1. That once a harlot, always a harlot. 2. That there is no possible advance, moral or physical, in the condition of the actual prostitute. 3. That the harlot's progress is short and rapid.”<sup>14</sup> Prostitution was seen as contrary to all that Victorians considered good in the world. Death would come quickly as punishment for sexual indiscretions in the popular mindset. A 1835 poem in the abolitionist paper, *The Liberator*, called “The Brothel”, expressed the comparison between prostitution and death that Victorians made. “Crime’s catacomb bedecked with spoils/ Of female honor,



peace and happiness,/ And 'sweet domestic bliss,' and holiest faith,/ And virginity, purity, and artless love,/ And filled (by guilt embalmed) with the living dead.”<sup>15</sup> This piece also made clear that the prostitute was the antitheses of ideal femininity.

In contrast to the popular view of the unsavable prostitute, a limited movement developed to treat “fallen” women with more compassion, blaming her poor condition upon society, and lack of religion, rather than an inherent deficiency. The writings of the movement reflected the severe condemnation from mainstream society prostitutes faced. In 1855, Antoinette Brown, writing for *The Liberator*, criticized the lack of concern for women involved in prostitution, and the Victorian inability to reabsorb fallen women into mainstream society. Brown wrote:

She finds no more space for repentance, though she may seek it carefully with tears...The most she can ever hope to attain to is the privilege to go mourning up and down in the presence of the good, unrebuked; pitied for her penitence; pointed at as a warning; commiserated for her hard fate; a living monument shedding its salt tears for the preservation of the yet uncorrupted.”<sup>16</sup>

In 1855, *The National Era*, a paper out of Washington, D.C., appealed to the public to be more humane to prostitutes. The anonymous female author argued it was not futile for Christian women to spread God to “fallen” women. She was concerned that, “we deny them the means, the very possibility, of being freed from sin, and of sinning no more. In fact, we say, let them remain unconverted, rather than they should pollute our atmosphere.”

Unsatisfied with this view towards prostitution, she suggested “let us give sisters to the sisterless, and through that blessed sympathy, God to the Godless.”<sup>17</sup> The author was not arguing to accept them into respectable society. She advocated “giving them a refuge apart, and mercenary care.”<sup>18</sup> The movements to aid prostitutes did not promote erasing their sins.

Rather, in their view, prostitutes still condemned by Victorian society, could find forgiveness with God.

Movements also formed against the dichotomy between how Victorians treated customers and prostitutes. An anonymous article in the *Frederick Douglass' Paper* exposed this duplicity in 1855. "I saw fallen woman; this is the stereotyped phrase: it is strictly specific. No one ever speaks of a fallen man...There is no such phrase common to our language...A man may be dissipated, or wild, or 'fast', or profligate; but never fallen." This anonymous author recognized what many Victorians did not: although men were just as responsible for sexual indiscretions as women, Victorians did not treat men with equal scorn. The poem continued to support the claim that society refused to reform the prostitute, noting, "the Magdalene, whose sin is branded on her forehead...is forever an alien to forgiveness."<sup>19</sup>

### ***New London's Attempts to Reform Seamen***

During the Victorian era, the common image of sailors was twofold. In one version, they were the lowest of the low, the dregs of society. They had no home, their lives at sea rested upon the whim of a captain, they wasted money on shore, used profanity, gallivanted with prostitutes, and fell victim to the vice of alcohol. The Victorian middle-class also had a romanticized image of "Jack Tar" as a brave, hard working, adventurous soul. The sailor was the epitome of masculinity, the master of nature, and vital to the continuation of commerce.<sup>20</sup> Nathaniel W. Taylor, a doctor on a whaling voyage out of New London, studied sailors while at sea, and romanticized their work habits. "A Jack afloat it not a reckless fellow; he possesses an energy and determination of character which compel the highest admiration." Taylor admired the physical work and labor of sailors, which many

professionals and middleclass men did not regularly partake in. He praised, “We speak of the hard mariners who...brave all things and endure all things for the mere love they bear to the ocean.”<sup>21</sup> He forgave Jack for his transgressions on shore. “All luck to the noble tar~! Who shall find fault with him if he has a frolic when his ship is brought safe to her harbor?”<sup>22</sup> Although Taylor could tolerate seamen’s vice, other members of the middle class saw the necessary good that sailors provided to society, but strove to help them find God and become more like their ideal “Jack Tar.”

Reforming sailors appealed to the middle class because seamen were seen as unfortunate lost boys without a moral female influence. A New Bedford society believed that seamen behaved poorly on shore because they lacked the “mutual guardianship and instruction” of being part of a church, “the restraint of public opinion,” and especially the sweet charities of the domestic circle.”<sup>23</sup> Generally, sailors received more open aid than prostitutes. Reforming seamen was a project that middle-class people saw as doable because sailors were not inherently immoral, but simply misguided. The first organization created to specifically help sailors was the Seamen’s Aid Society in Boston established in 1812. By the 1820s, many seaports along the east coast had developed their own versions, and in 1826, the America Seamen’s Friend’s Society began opening chapters and affiliates in many ports. The aid societies worked to improve the moral character and social well being of seamen by promoting temperance and Christianity. They opened boardinghouses free of alcohol, seamen’s churches called Beth Els, and reading rooms.<sup>24</sup> By 1844, the *Sailor’s Magazine*, the official publication of the American Seamen’s Friend Society, reported that there were twenty-eight Seamen’s Beth Els in America. The magazine also promoted temperance

boardinghouses, but it listed no religious or alcohol-free facilities for seamen in New London.<sup>25</sup>

As early as 1844, a reporter from the *Morning News* of New London called for a sailor's home. He felt that there should also be an organized medical relief fund for seamen.<sup>26</sup> New London lacked an official society to reform sailors until 1845, when a group of middle-class women created the Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society (LSFS) of New London, incorporated in May, 1847.<sup>27</sup> Raising and providing funds for seamen and their families, the LSFS sought to create temporary homes for seamen, eliminating the need for alternate forms of comfort such as prostitution and alcohol. These women donated their own money and fundraised for the "Promotion of the moral and religious welfare of seamen, [and] to furnish accommodations for homeless and sick seamen."<sup>28</sup> A major goal of the Society was providing a home for the out-of-town sailor.

During the nineteenth century, women had the duty of ensuring the morality of their husbands. For sailors without wives, these middle-class women wanted to provide the religious and moral support that they felt sailors lacked. Reflecting society's concern with the absence of women in seamen's lives, *The Sailor's Magazine*, reported that sailors were led "into haunts of dissipation the lowest and most horrible, and being far away from kindred or friends, and from the purifying association of home, mother, sisters, or wife, he is led step by step along the dark road of sin and ruin."<sup>29</sup> Committed to providing moral and social support for transient seamen, the LSFS stated "If a seaman is sick or destitute, a stranger, perhaps without any of the sympathies of the friends and home, let him know that... he will find attention, aid, counsel and friendship."<sup>30</sup> In order to provide this friendship, the Society

wanted to build a sailor's reading room, for "would not such a place be in fact a kind of *HOME* to the seaman?"<sup>31</sup>

The moral reform of seamen also included exposing him to religion. The LSFS "have anxiously sought to bring the sailor, during the brief intervals of his sojourn among us into the sphere of religious influence."<sup>32</sup> The Society explained their desire to help the seamen's soul.

...deprived as he is, for so great a portion of the time, of all the enlightening influences of Christian society, the pulpit, and the Sabbath, and remaining so short a time in port, Christianity calls upon us in tones of solemn earnestness to make the most of the short time, and endeavor to bring the simple truths of the gospel to bear on his heart and life.

In their report of 1856, the society explained the danger to a seamen's soul. "If we do nothing to open his eyes to the danger of a life of rebellion against God, the blood of our perishing brother lies at our door."<sup>33</sup>

In order to promote religion among sailors in the summer of 1847, the society financed a minister, religious texts, and a hall for a seamen's mission. The missionary they hired, Reverend Jones, led seamen in prayer and signing temperance pledges. As seen in sailor's sea shanties, alcohol and houses that provided it were linked with prostitution. Signing this pledge committed the seamen to a new way of life. The society sponsored a temperance boardinghouse where Reverend Jones would read the bible to seamen. Jones had limited success in converting seamen, and tells of a man who "stated that he had been married eleven years and had been separated seven times from his wife in consequence of intemperance, was induced to sign the pledge, which he did on his knees."<sup>34</sup> The mission, however, became too expensive to sustain, and other New Londoners created an official

Seamen's Beth El in 1847, continuing efforts to provide alternative communities for the sailor.<sup>35</sup>

The Ladies' Seamen's Friends Society also worried about seamen's health in New London. Seamen not only faced typical illnesses, but also specific ailments as a result of their lifestyle, such as venereal disease, or loss of limbs during perilous whaling voyages. Loosing a leg was common enough that artificial limb manufacturers advertised in the New London city directories.<sup>36</sup> Because many seamen lacked homes and families to care for them while ill, the LSFS advocated for a seamen's hospital.<sup>37</sup> There was a clinic called The Cottage that catered to injured seamen, but its facilities were inadequate. The Ladies gave funding to injured seamen, but did not organize a hospital. After the decline of the whalefishery in the late nineteenth century, the Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society main concern became financially supporting the many widows of whalers.<sup>38</sup>

Interestingly, the female reformers did not want to interact with the seamen themselves. Unwilling to allow seamen into respectable society, just like prostitution reformers, the Seamen's Aid Societies advocated separate churches and reading rooms for seamen, rather than including them in community churches. The women of the Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society did not proselytize to the seamen directly. They raised funds for a preacher to do so. Refined women stayed clear of the lower class objects of their charity, maintaining their proper status.<sup>39</sup> Just as with prostitutes, common seamen could be saved, but they were not to be included in respectable shore society.

### ***Prostitution Reform Through Punishment and Separation***

In contrast to seamen, major efforts to reform prostitutes did not begin until after the Civil War, and even then, they took on a more punitive nature than sailor reform societies. The only place in which a prostitute or a promiscuous woman could find refuge if she so needed was the New London almshouse. According to New London historian Francis Caulkins, The almshouse was created as:

a home for the poor, and also a workhouse and place of detention for rogues, vagabonds, sturdy beggars, idle, dissolute, and disorderly persons, runaways, stubborn children and servants, common drunkards, night-walkers, pilferers, and all persons who neglect their callings, mispend what they earn, and do not provide support for themselves and families<sup>40</sup>.

The almshouse was not a friendly society that attempted to reform by giving families money and preaching the gospel like the Lewis Female Cent Society and the Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society. The main goal of the almshouse was not reform, but confinement or punishment in order to keep the disorderly and poor off the streets. The unpleasant nature of the house was represented by Rachel Branby, perhaps an extreme case, who in 1804, "lay in at the almshouse was then six months with child and then ran away."<sup>41</sup> Branby opted to take her chances giving birth alone rather than stay in the almshouse. Once convicted of prostitution by the courts, women were sent to the prison rather than the almshouse. While seamen received churches and the sympathy of New London women, prostitutes received nothing. They were reformed in prison.

New London's apparent bias against providing aid to prostitutes was not a trend seen in all port towns. The New York Female Moral Reform Society in the 1830s and 1840s directly attempted to reform prostitutes. Magdalene Asylums arose throughout the city, providing homes to prostitutes in hopes of changing their lives by teaching middle-class

sexual values. These houses of refuge, however, were like prisons and personal freedom was severely restricted.<sup>42</sup>

In the case of prostitution, it was women who took up the reform movement. Women in urban centers felt threatened by the growing public sexuality. Wives, whose husbands frequented brothels, feared the loss of stability in society and their own families.<sup>43</sup> Although the desire to reform prostitutes may have existed among some New Londoners, they did not create a society to reform prostitutes. Those who felt threatened by the overt illicit sexuality in their midst, fought it through legal measures. While tackling seamen's vice through outreach, Victorian Americans put prostitutes through harsh reform institutions, or punished for their crimes.

### ***New London's Legal Battle Against Prostitution***

With the onslaught of urbanization, the growth of cities, and the development of transportation, prostitution expanded in port cities and towns, forcing respectable society to confront this illicit lifestyle. Christine Stansell argues in her study, *City of Women*, about sex and class in New York City, that the middle class became concerned with prostitution between 1820 and 1860 because "to them, prostitution was simply a verifiable empirical reality synonymous with the degradation of morals and public health."<sup>44</sup> Because prostitutes contrasted with the domestic ideal of what a proper woman should be, they became a social problem. Although major legal campaigns against prostitution and vice did not evolve until after the Civil War, most people if not yet most laws, argued that prostitution was immoral. Popular opinion leaned towards a legal solution, regulatory or punitive.<sup>45</sup>



One choice for municipalities was to prohibit prostitution entirely. Hill mentions that during 1855, Mayor Wood of New York City, lead an anti-vice crusade in which hundreds of streetwalkers were rounded up each night. This method was flawed in that some of these so-called prostitutes were merely homeless or out at night alone.<sup>46</sup> Even if cities had laws against prostitution, however, they did not always regularly enforce them except for irregular raids. In many areas, restricting prostitution was seen as undesirable. Timothy Gilfoyle explains that New York City law enforcement rarely prosecuted leading madams between 1830 and 1860. They mainly arrested women on the street, rather than in brothels, which attracted a more middle-class clientele.<sup>47</sup> In San Francisco and the western United States during the 1850s and 60s, most law enforcement officials turned a blind eye to prostitution, which provided an invaluable sexual outlet for a male dominated society. The British Royal Navy allowed their men to bring prostitutes on the ships while in port in order to prevent sodomy. During the Civil War, the military allowed prostitutes to follow troops because they were seen as good for morale. England had some difficulties passing harsher laws against prostitution, perhaps because according to Flora Tristan in 1839, French world traveler and author, many parliament members could be found in brothels after work.<sup>48</sup>

Unlike punitive solutions, regulation acknowledged prostitution as a necessary evil. Regulation proponents felt the best legislators could do was to simply charge prostitutes occasional fines, and treat them for venereal diseases in order to check its spread. William Sanger, chief resident physician at Blackwell Island's Hospital in New York, after conducting his study on New York prostitutes in 1855, advocated for the regulation of prostitution with a health program in order to better prevent the spread of venereal disease.<sup>49</sup> Sanger found in his 1855 survey of 2000 New York City prostitutes that 821 admitted to

having had a venereal disease. In St. Paul, Minnesota, prostitution was informally regulated from 1865 to 1883. The police brought in brothel owners to municipal court monthly and charged a fine. Many cities did not officially regulate prostitution, but rather regularly fined brothel owners and prostitutes, like collecting a licensing fee.<sup>50</sup>

Another option for middle-class people frustrated with brothels creeping into their neighborhoods was geographically separating prostitutes and brothels from respectable areas. Cities such as New York, New Orleans, San Francisco and Salt Lake City had vice districts either legally or by default. In many cities, because prostitution occurred outside of respectable neighborhoods, it was less of a concern to the middleclass.<sup>51</sup> New London, however, was hardly large enough for town sanctioned vice districts. All of the brothels and boardinghouses that supported prostitution did cluster, however, on streets near or along the waterfront, in order to cater to sailors. This area, especially Bank Street, was intermingled with respectable businesses (see fig. 1). Most of the houses of ill fame were located around Bradly and Potter Streets rather than Bank Street. These streets consisted of boardinghouses and tenements. Because some houses of prostitution were on Bank Street, however, the business of providing sexual services, particularly for sailors, did intrude on the lives of some middle-class residents. Ignoring prostitution throughout the 1830s, New London began to strictly enforce the punitive measures in the 1840s that were already on the law books.

Under Connecticut law, prostitutes were punished as vagrants, sentenced to time in the workhouse. By the late eighteenth century, the town expected prisoners to be able to pay for their keep through work. Any extra money the prisoners made would be used to care for their families. In New London County, the first workhouse was built in Norwich in 1795. Men and women (many prostitutes) were sent to the workhouse. With the resulting rise of

female prisoners, state law in 1813 proclaimed that there must be separate confinements for males and females. Before 1821, towns had free jurisdiction over whom they sent to the workhouse. By 1821, the State of Connecticut more clearly defined the types of people that could be imprisoned. Prostitutes and drunkards, those who failed to support their family, beggars, and vagrants all could be sent to the workhouse for a period not exceeding forty days.<sup>52</sup> The development of the workhouse system in New England reflected the belief that it was the fault of an individual if he or she was impoverished or immoral.

Interestingly, Connecticut placed prostitution in a different sphere than other crimes of a sexual nature. Whereas prostitutes went to prisons under vagrancy laws, the state considered fornication and adultery as sexual offenses, even though prostitution involved these two crimes. Despite these legal differentiations, in 1824, prostitution was not punished more harshly than fornication. If two single people had sex, they were put in the common jail for one month, the same amount of time a prostitute could go to the workhouse. The fornicators had the option of paying seven dollars in order to escape this punishment.<sup>53</sup> Those who committed adultery, however, were sent to the state prison for three to four years. Adultery was a crime that tempted the middle class and broke marital vows. This harsh punishment was intended to keep middle-class women inline. Prostitution seemed to be a crime that affected the poor and was less of a direct threat to middle-class society. Miranda Beckwith, who was married while prostituting, for example, was only arrested for prostitution, not adultery.<sup>54</sup>

In 1824, the Connecticut State legislature further defined prostitution. This statute extended to “all lewd and dissolute persons, who frequent houses of bad fame; and all common prostitutes, and common drunkards.”<sup>55</sup> This law now distinguished between

prostitutes who sold themselves on the streets, and those who worked in brothels. The law also grouped and drunkards and prostitutes together, showing that drunkenness often came hand in hand with prostitution. There were three cases of prostitution that went before the Justice of the Peace in the 1820s.<sup>56</sup> In the 1830s in New London, however, no cases of prostitution were heard before a judge. New London law enforcement may have decided to ignore prostitution because it was good for the economy. These brothels brought income not only to those who worked in the sex industry, but the businesses surrounding them. This may have been a particularly important issue during the economic depression of the decade.<sup>57</sup>

In 1841, the Connecticut State Legislature declared that paupers would be sent to the workhouse, while vagrants, including prostitutes, would be sent to prison. This separation between vagrants and paupers showed that Victorians viewed prostitution as more criminal than ever. The law reflected a growing belief that prostitutes were simply immoral, rather than impoverished people driven to sex work. New London law enforcement officials began to view prostitution as more criminal, and there were thirty-eight arrests for prostitution related crimes from 1842 to 1849. However, of the arrests during this time, only twenty-eight received convictions, mostly because the individuals accused did not show up for court after they paid bail.

The rise in arrests in the 1840s could be due to the growing in population and success of the whaling industry that brought in more seamen and prostitutes. New London's population grew between 1840 and 1845, from 5519 people to 8850 people.<sup>58</sup> Between 1842 and 1845, there were twenty-nine arrested for prostitution. As New London's growth rate slowed down after 1845, so did arrests. In 1845, the peak of the whaling industry, New London had a population of 8850 people. In 1850, the population had only grown to 8991

people. There were only twelve arrests between 1846 and 1850. Only New London had grown this rapidly among the surrounding towns in the area, signifying an influx of new residents. In 1840, New London represented 12.4 % of the county population while in 1850 it accounted for approximately 17%.<sup>59</sup>

Throughout the 1840s, the judges gave the harshest punishments to those who managed houses of ill fame as opposed to the girls who worked in them. Between 1842 and early 1844, the local court fined brothel owners between twenty and fifty dollars, and they were only sent to prison if they could not pay the fine. If a couple was arrested, the fine was sometimes split between the two people. In April of 1844, however, the court fined Jemima King \$100 dollars after being arrested three other times. Convicted the most times of any madam during this era, the judges increased her fine over time from \$20 to \$50 to \$100. A common sentence for prostitutes or girls who frequented houses of ill fame was twenty days without a fine except for the cost of prosecution, which was charged to all people who went to court at this time. These arrests reflected the desire of the town to make money by fining madams. As fines increased, managers had a more difficult time of paying them. Prostitutes who could not afford high fines were sent automatically to prison.

In 1845, reflecting the growing number of prostitutes in urban areas and people's disgust with them, the State of Connecticut raised the punishments for prostitutes and brothel owners. People that owned or resided in houses of ill fame could be now sent to the common jail for six months.<sup>60</sup> The law also made the definition in writing between people who owned houses of ill fame, and those who worked there, although both were subject to the same punishments. This enhancement of detail in the law meant that Connecticut had more experience with the prostitution industry and understood it in greater detail. This law did not

specify any harsher punishments for prostitutes who did not work in a brothel. This may be because the actual houses where prostitutes worked were more offensive to the middle-class, being organized and more visible.

After 1847, New London began sending some of their prostitution cases to the County Court. After the Revolution, prostitution cases fell in the jurisdiction of towns. This trend towards sending prostitution cases to the higher courts showed that Connecticut Victorians began to treat prostitution more seriously.<sup>61</sup> Madams continued to receive fifty dollars fines, the amount generally charged in the past. The women subject to harsher penalties, however, were the prostitutes who lived in brothels. Previously, an approximately one month sentence was normal for prostitution. Longer prison time and fines, however, became the norm. Two brothel prostitutes were sentenced to three months in prison, and fined twenty-five dollars in 1848. In 1849, Anne Pennyman received a sentence of four months in prison without a fine. Miranda Beckwith was sentenced to two months, and fined twenty-five dollars. The harsher punishments for prostitution and frequent jail sentences reflected a middle-class desire to subdue New London prostitution.

Between 1850 and 1854, prostitution arrests were few, totaling three. After 1854, the County Court records are missing. The 1854 issue of *The Slave's Cry*, a New London based abolitionist newspaper, provided one explanation for this decline in prostitution arrests. An article accused the justices of New London of being controlled by the criminal element, making them unwilling to prosecute prostitution crimes. The author of one article in this newspaper accused:

Let it be known everywhere, that the present incumbent and democratic candidate for re-election has been down on his knees, in all the filth of grog shops, heeding the behests of GAMBLERS, PROSTITUTES and GROG SELLERS...(so says one of the delegates that nominated him).<sup>62</sup>

It is clear from this passage that the author would have ulterior motives in ruining the reputation of this elected official, since they were trying to prevent his reelection to office. Political corruption, common in other cities, could explain the decline in arrests.

Although the law specified that “persons” who frequent houses of ill fame could be prosecuted, women were the more likely targets. This is a theme seen all over the country. In New York, there was a movement to equalize the blame. Men were rarely arrested for crimes of a sexual nature, especially for sleeping with prostitutes. For fornication and adultery, men and women could receive the same amount of time in prison, if the man was charged. With prostitution, however, men were arrested under fornication charges, rather than specifically for frequenting a house of ill fame or sleeping with a prostitute, even though they could legally be arrested as a person who frequented houses of ill fame. Mathew Loops was charged with fornication with a prostitute, but he was found not guilty. He was visible in the prostitution scene, called as a witness in no less than five prostitution and house of ill fame management cases. While most women tried for prostitution were found guilty, Mathew was found innocent despite his reputation for frequenting houses of ill fame.<sup>63</sup>

Although prostitutes had lifestyles outside Victorian sexual constructs, the middle-class ideology infiltrated their lives through legal proceedings. The middle class could not allow for such strong, public, female sexual expression to exist in New London. As the number of seamen rose in the 1840s, New London officials imprisoned and fined prostitutes more frequently. Although Victorians frowned on male promiscuity, they did not view it as criminal as female illicit sex. Neither the law nor reform societies treated men who slept with prostitutes as criminal, although there were small movements to do so in larger urban centers. Female prostitution, however, was viewed in New London and much of America as

an immoral and criminal act. For women who fell, there was no redemption.



# 2

## Transient Seamen and Women: Creating the Facade of Home

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Reformers and contemporary observers between 1820 and 1860 noted that sailors frequently rendezvoused with prostitutes while in port cities. Notorious for excessive drinking and sexual exploits, *Harper's Weekly*, a widely read news paper of the time, reported that sailors were "often...guilty of the most revolting excess and licentious conduct."<sup>64</sup> Some reformers, concerned with prostitution and its connection with the maritime industry, did not hesitate to record the information about the causes of prostitution, and who participated in it. Dr. William Sanger, the resident doctor at New York City's women's prison, Blackwell Island, conducted a study on prostitution in the mid 1850's. When seamen came to the city in large numbers after a period of good weather, Sanger noted waterfront brothels were "crowded, and for a few days, or while the sailors' wages last, a very extensive business is carried on."<sup>65</sup> Sanger described the process in which sailors and prostitutes became companions.

The bar-room...is the reception room, and here may be seen at almost any hour of the day a number of weather-beaten sailors.... Sailors buy men and women drinks...[and] By such a course he very soon gets intoxicated, when a girl whom he has honored with his special attention conveys him to bed, and leaves him there to sleep himself sober".<sup>66</sup>

Sanger followed that “if, by any miracle, all the seamen and strangers visiting New York could be transformed into moral men, at least ½ to 2/3 of the houses of ill fame would be absolutely bankrupt.”<sup>67</sup> In a city in which not only sailors relied on prostitution, but businessmen and men from all professions, this was a high ratio. Sanger noted that transience was one major reason why men desired prostitutes in New York City. His estimate only included sailors and travelers, leaving out other such transients as young bachelors who had recently moved to the city in search of clerical work.

Prostitution not only existed in large metropolises like New York, but wherever sailors departed ships. Rev. Francis Wayland, in an attempt to call attention to the issue of prostitution in New Bedford, a whaling port much like New London, recognized that not just sailors, but whalemens spent time with prostitutes. In the 1830s, the Reverend lamented, “these heroes of a three year campaign...come home to fall into the hands of harpies, to be stripped in grog shops...they land, and are adrift.”<sup>68</sup>

The fact that many sailors chose to spend their earnings on sex is clear. The relationship between these men and women, however, was complicated and involved sailors’ searching not just for entertainment, but also for a temporary sense of home. If a sailor lacked a wife or mother in a particular port, he often sought a surrogate. Lacking a family, seamen needed to find something in port to fulfill their neglected sexual appetites as well as their need for female companionship.

### *Transience and Loneliness of Seamen*

New London, a whaling and general shipping port, was crawling with transient travelers and seamen, frequently arriving and departing, but lacking steady homes. Historian Robert Owen Decker described the lively atmosphere of New London in the 1840s:

The entire harbor bustled with activity and 400 to 600 sailors moved about the streets. All wharves were busy and money appeared plentiful. With all this prosperity, the town lacked sidewalks, lamp-posts and even policemen to keep order. Some sections near the waterfront developed bad reputations especially places where rum cost three to four cents a glass.<sup>69</sup>

Of all sailors who arrived in port, The New London *Morning News* estimated in 1844 that three quarters of them were not from New London.<sup>70</sup> According to New London historian Francis Caulkins, the total number of seamen employed in New London was 3,000 in 1845 when the residential populace was only 8,000.<sup>71</sup> Although many New Londoners worked in the whalefishery, the industry needed more labor, attracting men to the city without families. Other seamen came to New London from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York.<sup>72</sup> Many came willingly, while some were brought against their will. Nathaniel Taylor, a doctor who sailed aboard a New London whaler in 1851, related the story of one kidnapped young man, who while in:

New York, he got into a frolic, spent his money, and while in doubt how to regain his position was accosted by a shipping agent, who gave him money with the promise of high wages for a short voyage. He accepted while under the influence of shame and liquor, and was kept in a state of intoxication till he found himself at sea destined to a long voyage. This is a common story.<sup>73</sup>

Kidnapping men to sail on ill-manned vessels occurred commonly throughout the maritime world. In the Royal British Navy, it was known as impressment. In San Francisco, where men unwillingly found themselves on voyages to China, they were “Shanghaied”.

Despite hiring and kidnapping men from the Northeast, Nathaniel Taylor, noted in his memoirs that “Whaleships rarely leave home fully manned, but make it an objective to procure men and boys, which they can do easily and cheaply, at some of the numerous islands in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.”<sup>74</sup> Often, Portuguese and Cape Verdean men joined New London whalers. Yankees, Hawaiians, African Americans, Portuguese, and other races all mixed on vessels and in New London streets. This mix of seamen, from various parts of American and the globe, were brought back to New London, creating a city of transient people without a local home.<sup>75</sup>

Men on shipping voyages, especially whaling expeditions, spent long months without a female presence. By 1850, the average whaling expedition lasted forty-two months.<sup>76</sup> Jestin Martin, who quit his job as a New London whaleman, explained to his brother that if he joined a whaler, he would miss women to the extent that the first girl he would see upon returning to shore, “will look so pretty that you will bite a piece of her cheek before you know it.”<sup>77</sup> Underway, seamen might see at least one woman in the form of a captain’s wife on their own vessel or another whaler. The seamen did not view the Captain’s wife as a potential sexual mate. Rather, she was a somewhat detached link to the domestic, moral Victorian woman’s sphere. She often acted as mother figures to younger boys on the ship, and nurse to the sick and injured.<sup>78</sup> Her main concern, however, was to be a wife to the captain. Although she brought a presence of female domesticity on board, the other seamen lacked their own wives.

Merchant ships might also have female passengers on board other than the captain’s family. These women were a source of temptation for some men, but captains strictly forbid romantic relations with passengers. William Lord Stevens of Stonington, who sailed on the

Mystic, Connecticut ship Trescott, bound for California in 1850, related an incident in his journal in which some female passengers felt threatened by a certain sailor. After drinking one evening, the Third Mate snuck into the bunk that the two female passengers on board shared. He stripped off the covers and said to one of them, "Its me my dear now pray lye still/ Until of you I have had my will." The girl threatened to report the incident to the captain, and subsequently the Third Mate left. She feared the Third Mate might return, and told the Captain of the licentious sailor's inappropriate advances. The Captain called the Third Mate to his cabin, and swore that if the he ever went to the women's bunks again, he would flog him.<sup>79</sup>

Another source of femininity on board was the figurehead of the vessel. Often, these were busts of women that provided the seamen with some reminder of the opposite sex. Female figureheads were not popular until the late eighteenth century, and often were representations of the owner's wife or daughter.<sup>80</sup> Some figureheads depicted scantily dressed or half naked women. One rudder head that illustrated this well is *Saucy Sally*, a large breasted female bust with a dress cut beneath her nipples.<sup>81</sup> Some figureheads were completely topless if they were representing a mythical creature such as a mermaid or a siren. It is unclear if these artistic representations provided relief or frustration to seamen lacking real women.

Not all men desired women, however. Some preferred men, while others used male companions for sexual release while underway. Homosexual expression on board ships was somewhat common, but difficult due to lack of privacy. Sexual acts did occur in the crowded fo'c'stle. Sometimes, these acts took on a nature of abuse, rather than consensual activity. One eighteenth-century British Navy sailor, while engaging in intercourse with a young boy,

awakened the man he shared his bunk with. The bedmate held down the two committing the illegal act, and reported their indiscretion, resulting in the execution of the boy and seaman.<sup>82</sup> Officers who had more private living arrangements engaged in homosexuality more secretly. In another Royal Navy trial in 1807, a lieutenant had on multiple occasions sexually abused a young boy in his room. The officer was only discovered because the young boy complained repeatedly to another shipmate, and because a young girl happened to look through the keyhole bringing the officer's crime to the attention of history and the courts. However, it would be naive to think consensual acts of homosexuality did not occur. British Naval captains did not discourage their men in engaging in prostitution because they felt it would prevent men from committing sodomy.<sup>83</sup> In the Royal Navy in England, sodomy was punishable by death in order to discourage it. Officers allowed women to board navy ships while in port, in order to help satisfy men's sexual urges alternatively.<sup>84</sup>

Many seamen, however, were married and had families. Officers and captains were especially likely to be married because they were older and career seamen. The average white sailor was young and often left the sea life to marry at a later age. African-American seamen were also more likely to make a career out of being a sailor and often had wives and children at home.<sup>85</sup> However, marriage did not always prevent using the services of a prostitute. Some officers even established multiple homes. The Royal Navy of England desired to give some form of pension to the widows of their officers and established the "Court of the Commissioners for the Managing the Charity for the Relief of Poor Widows of Commission and Warrant Officers of the Royal Navy." Between 1750 and 1800, however, twenty-two cases occurred in which two widows applied for the pension of the same man,

meaning that these men successfully established two households in different areas.<sup>86</sup> For some men, infidelity became a permanent arrangement.

### ***The Relationship Between Sailors and Prostitutes Revealed Through Song***

The common Jack Tar left little written evidence concerning his escapades with women of ill repute. One way to reveal the interactions between sailors and prostitutes is through the study of one art form sailors did leave behind: sea shanties.<sup>87</sup> On long whaling voyages, many sailors fantasized about women, and composed songs about prostitutes, sweethearts, and sexual encounters. Many developed as work songs to help men handle the sails as a team. Seamen also sang while relaxing in the fo'c'stle. These songs from the age of sail survive today because literate sailors recorded them in diaries or letters and aged sailors recorded them years later to ensure that the seamen's music tradition was not lost with the age of sail. In addition to providing entertainment for sailors, sea shanties reflect that seamen saw women in the sex industry as an available commodity and as a replacement for missing legitimate female figures such as mothers and wives. Shanties also provided warning to sailors about spending excessive amounts of money on women, the risk of an emotional heartbreak, and the ever-present threat of contracting venereal disease.

While at sea, the expectation that women and alcohol would be available at the next port provided motivation for sailors. Leaving New York City, sailors remembered fondly the girls in port. They soon replaced the memory of women they left with the expectation of finding new loves, singing, the sea shanty "Black Ball Line." Dating from the early nineteenth century, the song expressed, "We'll Sing to the girls we have left on the shore/ But the Liverpool town will supply plenty more."<sup>88</sup> While docking, men expected to quickly

find women. Thinking of when their boat would next come into land, seamen sang “Early in the Morning,” popular in the 1860s when on the way to London. “Now my boys we’re in the docks,/ The pretty girls come out in flocks.”<sup>89</sup>

Expecting to find women on their travels, seamen placed sex in the category of comfort items for sailors, along with alcohol, food, and being on land. The shanty “South Australia”, sung by sailors about to arrive at the port of Melbourne, expressed, “And we’ll all go ashore/ Where we will drink with girls galore.”<sup>90</sup> In “South Australia” the seamen use the common term for a prostitute, “Julia,” to describe their feelings of comfort and familiarity upon finding a woman. “Julia sling the she-oak at the bar / And welcomes sailors from afar.”<sup>91</sup> Although her presence was comforting, the fact that she was drinking made her more appealing. Alcohol, although a comfort in itself, also allowed for the quicker bedding of individuals. Drunk women were more likely to sleep with men, and drunk seamen were more likely to spend their money on women. After buying women drinks, showing them a good time, and drinking she-oak, a strong proof liquor from South Australia, the seamen expected sex, singing, “In the arms of girls we’ll dance and sing, / For she-oak will be Ruler King / Drunk! For she-oak’s gone to our head / The girls can put us all to bed.”<sup>92</sup> The expectation of women and alcohol was clearly expressed in this song.

Sea shanties also served as a form of pornography for sailors by graphically describing the sexual acts they could not obtain while on board ships. In these shanties, women become objects valued for their sex. The song, “A-Rovin’ ” was a favorite of sailors, and had numerous variations. It described the beginning of the sexual foreplay with a maid who was “mistress of her trade,” being prostitution.<sup>93</sup> One version began by expressing the loneliness the sailor felt while at sea, driving him to desire sex. “This last ten months I’ve



bin to sea, Ah' hell, this gal looked good to me.”<sup>94</sup> The song continued to describe many parts of the woman's body. Shanty men refer to such songs as “anatomic progressions.” “A-Rovin' ” followed:

I put me arm around her waist,  
Sez she, “Young man, yer in great haste!”

I put me hand upon her knee,  
Sez she, “Young man, yer rather free!”

“I put me hand upon her thigh,  
Sez she, “Young man, yer rather high!”<sup>95</sup>

In “A Rovin' ” the woman did not mind his attentions. Although she pretended to protest, she gave into his advances. She benefits when the sailor gives her all his money at the end of the song. Another shanty, “The Fire Ship”, graphically described sex, using terms from a ship.

So up the stairs and into bed I took that maiden fair.  
I fired off my cannon into her thatch of hair.  
I fired off a broadside until my shot was spent,  
Then rammed that fire ship's waterline until my ram was bent.<sup>96</sup>

Using ship terminology to describe sex objectified the woman. Although the purpose of these songs was to create an image of a female body, the seaman found importance in getting to know his lover. “A Rovin' ” began, “I took this fair maid for a walk,/ An' we had such a lovin' talk.”<sup>97</sup> Although seamen stayed in port short periods of time, they enjoyed building some form of emotional companionship with these women as well.

The sailors accepted that their way of life was a cycle of earning money and spending it on women and liquor, often celebrating this fact. A popular song on Yankee ships, “The Gals O' Dublin Town,” stated, “An' when the voyage is all done, an' we go away on shore,/

We'll spend our money on the gals, 'n' go to sea for more!"<sup>98</sup> Another shanty, "Rio Grande," about stopping in Brazil, humorously noted the large amount of money sailors spent. "Oh fare ye well, all ye ladies o' town, / We've left ye enough for to buy a silk gown."<sup>99</sup> "The Planes of Mexico," brought on board ships by sailors who deserted the British Navy to fight in the Mexican-American War, recognized the expense of women, but related that sailors were willing to pay the money because they enjoyed the company so much. "Them little brown girls I do adore/ I love 'em all each sailor-robbin' whore."<sup>100</sup> While some songs celebrated the sailor's life on shore, others warn against excess. In "A Long Time Ago," an American shanty that became the most popular song to raise halyards to in the 1890's, a mother warned, "Me son, ye'll rue the day/ When the girls have blown, lad, all yer pay."<sup>101</sup> At first, the son disregarded his mother, only to regret spending all of his money on women.

Sailors often projected the legitimate Victorian female roles of mother, sweetheart, and wife that they lacked upon prostitutes. Female boardinghouse and tavern owners often became surrogate mothers in the minds of seamen. In the shanty "Outward Bound" the seamen described a tavern in which "Mother Langley comes with her usual smile." In this shanty, the tavern owner was a welcoming, warm figure that provided motherly comfort to the sailors in the form of women, liquor, and housing. Some sailors had favorite prostitutes they returned to while on shore. The shanty "Rio Grande," after the seamen explained that they left all their money with the ladies in town, clarified, "We soon will return to the Molls left behind."<sup>102</sup> The word moll refers to a casual relationship or girlfriend rather than a one-night lover. Often, sailors returned to the same prostitute and pretended to be in a marriage while on shore. Hemyng Bracebridge, the co-author on a study on London poor in the 1860s,

recorded the testimony of a German woman in London who expressed that she serviced sailors that considered her as their wife. "I know very many sailor's-six, eight, ten, oh - more then that. They are my husbands. I am not married, of course not, but they think me their wife while they are on shore. I do not care much for any of them; I have a lover of my own." Despite the fact that they return to her, she saw them as a source of income, rather than marriage partners. She further explained her monetary relationship with one sailor, "He is nice man and give me all his money when he land always. I take all his money while he with me, and not spend it quick...Sailor boy always spend money like rain water."<sup>103</sup> While on shore, the couple was together for more then for entertainment purposes. This woman ran the finances of the couple, and ensured that it lasted for a longer period of time.

Seamen feared building relationships with women on port, because their sweethearts might simply want money, or have affairs while the seaman was away. A woman who claimed to be monogamous and in love with a seamen, but was in fact simply using him for his money, was viewed as despicable, as seen in the lyrics, of "A Rovin' ."<sup>104</sup> "She swore that she'd be true to me/ But spent me pay-day fast and free.../ Now when I got home from sea/ A soger had her on his knee." After giving his heart to this woman, she spent his money and cheated on him while he was at sea. It was unclear from the song whether she intended to cheat the sailor from the beginning, or if she attempted to stay monogamous but resorted to another lover either for money or emotional support. The attached seamen risked many men stepping into their place as husband and lover while away at sea. Reflecting seamen's wariness of failed relationships, in "Liza Lee," a sailor traveled to India in order to earn money to buy his love Liza Lee a wedding ring. However, when he returned, his love had lost interest in him. "Liza Lee she's jilted me,/ Now she will not marry me."<sup>105</sup> Another song

reflected their fear of being cuckolded, called “The Whalemen’s Wives.” A fictional, nightmare wife described her position on faithfulness while her husband was on a whaling voyage. “My husband dear has gone to sea./ Oh sad, it is, my case./ But there’s plenty more upon the shore,/ Another must take his place.”<sup>106</sup>

The reality that women needed monetary rewards for their companionship often jolted sailors out of their fantasies that they had committed girlfriends and mothers. Whether these women charged by the favor or hour, or slept with men for drink, food and entertainment in return, promiscuous sex on shore cost money. Sailors recognized that their consumption of alcohol and women quickly dissipated their salaries they had earned on their last voyage. This caused many seamen to return to sea sooner than they would like. The song “Outward Bound” recognized that women who were motherly or wife figures on shore abandoned seamen when their salaries ran out. “And when our money’s all gone and spent, / There’s none to be borrowed and none to be lent, / Mother Langley comes with her usual frown, / Saying, “Get up, Jack, Let John sit down!”<sup>107</sup> A tavern owner, who once would serve a rich seaman with pleasure, suddenly turned cold when a sailor ran out of money.

Sailors faced the danger that the women they slept with would rob them for more money than they intended to pay. Seamen differentiated between loose women who sleep with them for money, and other women who cheated them. In the popular shanty “New York Girls,” a seaman expressed “When the drinking it was over, we straight to bed did go/And little did I ever think she’d prove my overthrow/ When I came to next morning, I had an aching head/ And there was I, Jack-all-alone, stark naked on the bed.”<sup>108</sup> The song warning men against thieves continued, “So come all you bully sailormen, take warning when ashore/ Or else you’ll meet some charming girl who’s nothing but a whore.” Apparently, the girl a

seaman bought sex from gained the negative connotation of whore once she stole his money without permission. For seamen, sex workers could take on multiple identities.

Venereal diseases also concerned seamen, and often if a seaman caught one, he blamed it on the female. One sea shanty told the tale of a seaman who willingly had sex with a woman who cheated him by stealing his affects and by giving him a venereal disease. The song compared venereal disease to a ship on fire, recognizing the fact that diseases such as syphilis often drastically shorten life spans.<sup>109</sup> Other diseases did create soars on genitals that burned like fire. The song explained:

I handled her, I dangled her, an' found to my surprise,  
She was nothing but a fire ship rigged up in a disguise  
My clothes she'd hocked; my watch she stole; my sea bag was gone too  
But she'd left behind a souvenir, I'd have you all to know  
And in nine days, to my surprise, there was fire down below."<sup>110</sup>

Another song, "Pills of White Mercury" told of a sailor who died from venereal disease. The sailor lamented his condition, and blamed the girl for his disease. "And had she but told me, oh when she dishonored me/ Had she but told me of it in time/ I might have been cured by those pills of white mercury/ Now I am a young man cut down in my prime."<sup>111</sup> The young man disregarded that it was also his fault for contracting the disease, and placed all the blame on the female. The young man warned, "And never go courting with the girls in the city,/ Flash girls of the city were the ruin of me."<sup>112</sup> Traditionally, loose women have been blamed for the spread of venereal disease rather than men.<sup>113</sup> "Pills of White Mercury" also described this young man's funeral and the decay he suffered from taking mercury pills. Mercury was a common treatment in the nineteenth century for syphilis and other diseases.<sup>114</sup> However, side effects of the drug caused bleeding of the gums, nerve damage, and death

often before syphilis did. Once a person contracted a venereal disease, they often had to choose between death by the illness, or the cure.

Despite the preponderance of sea shanties that portrayed sailors as promiscuous, other sailors avoided prostitutes either to avoid the immorality of promiscuity, or to remain faithful to a lover. In the shanty “Rolling King,” the seamen expressed that he said goodbye to his wife when he left the dock. “There ain’t but one thing grieves me mind,/ To leave my wife an’ child behind.”<sup>115</sup> The sex, excessive drinking and gambling in port appalled seaman William Lord Stevens. After serving on the ship, he debarked in San Francisco in order to try to find gold. California in the 1850s offered no respite from the rowdiness of sailortown, a lifestyle that transferred into mining towns. After experiencing excessive prostitution and vice, Stevens realized that happiness was not found in, “...Wine or Cards or Dice/ Or with Women stained with creme and vice/ Its not with those who happiest seem.”<sup>116</sup> In order to survive in this immoral environment, Stevens prayed to God for his salvation and the punishment of those around him. Stevens, without female companionship, longed for his mother and sister in his journal, as well as a sweetheart at home who married another. Even though Steven abhorred prostitution, he still longed for women.

Seamen attempted to alleviate their desire for sex and lack of home by procuring prostitutes. Through sea shanties, it is seen that many sailors formed relationships with prostitutes that were purely physical but with emotional undertones reflecting their desire for a legitimate female relationship. Some sailors even created temporary homes with prostitutes while on shore. Middle-class society viewed these relationships as illegitimate. In contrast to the idea of the “fallen” woman, seamen often saw value in women working the docks. Seamen created a ranged of images of prostitutes, from more positive views of companion,

wife, girlfriend, to more negative views of thief, disease carrier, sex-object, and whore.

Although studying sea shanties sheds more light on the roles of prostitutes, they explain more how seamen viewed their relationships with prostitutes, rather than what prostitutes' lives were actually like.

# 3

## Prostitutes, Madams, and Fancy Men: Working in the New London Prostitution Industry

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Francis Manwaring Caulkins wrote in her history of New London, Connecticut that “it was remarked by the inhabitants of other towns that something bold, uncommon and startling was always going on in New London.”<sup>117</sup> Although this statement was in reference to New London in the colonial period, her generalization still held quite true in the early to mid-nineteenth century. New London, the only major seaport in New London County, attracted many impoverished, transient individuals looking for work that the surrounding farming communities could not provide. For some job searchers, the only way they found to make a living was through prostitution, either by selling their bodies themselves, or by managing those who did. Those who worked in sailortown as a prostitute, madam, or pimp faced risks such as violence, arrest, prison time, social ostracism, and disease. These workers often could only depend on each other and developed a semblance of familial relationships. These bonds were often tenuous and could end in violence. Despite Victorian expectations, some prostitutes married and cared for children. Seamen and prostitutes, being in the same social class, also occasionally married. For most prostitutes, however, their profession



stigmatized them to the extent they could never marry or find another profession if they so desired.

### ***New London's Neighborhoods of Vice***

Sailors and travelers would first arrive in downtown New London up river from the Long Island Sound. Seamen did not have to wander far from their places of employment to find lodging, drink, and women. The established boardinghouses and brothels specifically providing prostitution were located on Water Street, Bank Street and the immediate vicinity (see fig. 1). These two streets ran along the bank of the Thames River, separated by State Street, which ran inland. The New London County Court House was and still is situated on top of a hill on State Street, which looks down upon the river, neighbored by the homes of sea captains and businessmen. State Street was the commercial center of New London in the nineteenth century. Most of the banks, stores, and government buildings were located there. Its end, by the docks, was an open area called the parade, which sustained a fish market. Francis Manwaring Caulkins, in her history of New London written in 1860, described State Street as attractive, plentiful with trees. Detailing the positive aspects in her town, Caulkins neglected to mention State Street's perpendicular neighbor, Bank Street, which also had many businesses, the City Hotel where Daniel Webster once stayed, private homes, and its own official building: the Customs House.<sup>118</sup> The business of Bank Street, however, were of a more illicit variety. Saloons, brothels, and boardinghouses attracted a rowdier clientele than State Street. Mary Craig Lopez, a convicted madam, operated her boardinghouse at 55 Bank Street in the 1850s, a few buildings away from the Customs House. Mother King, a madam who's violent reputation earned her an article in the *New London Day* seventy years after she



Fig. 1. Downtown New London in 1850. The streets highlighted in red represent areas where brothels are known to have been located from 1840 - 1853. This map is modified from *Plan of the City of New London New London County, Connecticut from Original Surveys* (Philadelphia: Collins & Clark, 1850).

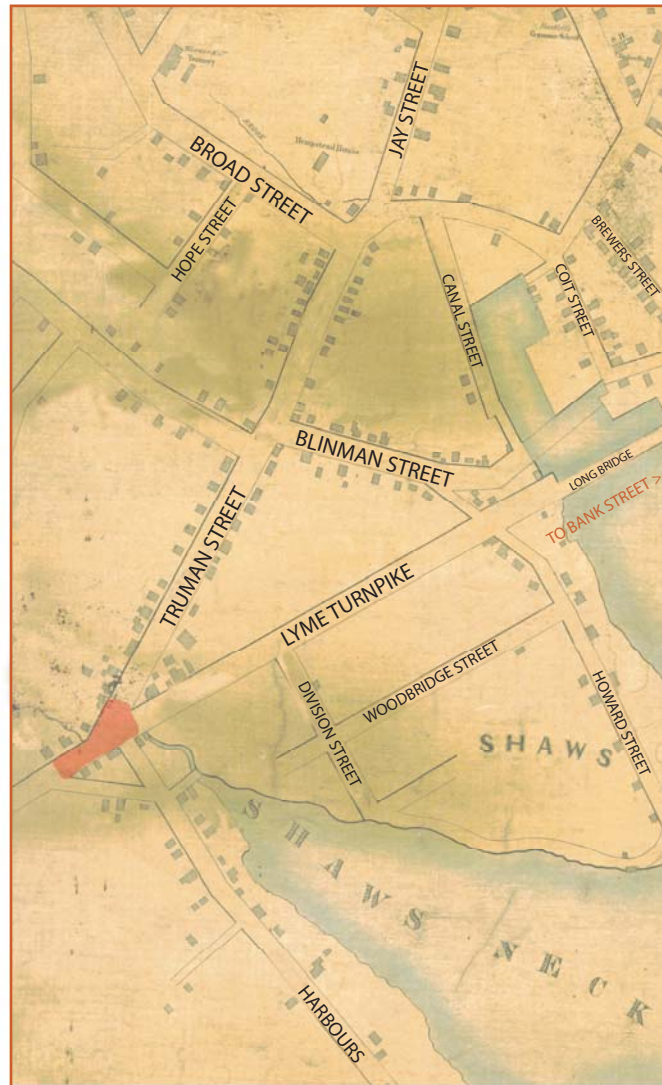


Fig. 2. Truman Brook Vicinity, New London, in 1850. This area is just south of Fig.1. Fig. 1. begins just over Long Bridge. Lyme Turnpike is a continuation of Bank Street, and is currently called Bank Street. The parts of streets highlighted in red represent areas where brothels are known to have been located from 1840 - 1853. This map is modified from *Plan of the City of New London New London County, Connecticut from Original Surveys* (Philadelphia: Collins & Clark, 1850).

was a presence, operated two brothels on Bank Street at separate times: one a block from the Customs House, and another at the outskirts of town, far from the business center, but still close to the river and docks (see fig. 2).

Most brothels and boardinghouses that catered to prostitution, however, were located in the neighborhood north of State Street between Water Street and Main (see fig. 1). This neighborhood along the waterfront was made up almost entirely of boardinghouses and tenements where the working poor and seamen, between voyages, resided. Frank Sanson operated a brothel on Water Street in the 1840s. Hannah Billings operated her house of prostitution on Potter Street, which was one street inland and parallel to Water in the 1840s. Sophia Josephs ran a brothel on Potter Street in the early 1850s. The next street parallel up the hill, Bradley Street, was the location of the establishments of convicted madams Jemima King in the early 1840s, Clara Antone in the late 1840s, and Serepta Lewis (Gaulette) in the early 1850s. Prison Street, running parallel to State Street, perpendicular to the river, not only had the common jail on it, as its name suggests, but it also had notorious tavern and the brothel of Hester Leonard. Main Street, which bordered this neighborhood on the west, was a major road, which lead up north to the farms of New London and Waterford. It's proximity to the water, docks, and this neighborhood made it also a prime spot for boardinghouses and prostitution. There are no records of brothel owners who operated on Main Street, but there were many female run boardinghouses along this street, making it a plausible location for prostitution activity.<sup>119</sup>

***A Lack of Alternatives: Choosing Work in the Prostitution Industry as a Woman***

Becoming a prostitute automatically resulted in social ostracism. The stigmatism lowered chances for future legitimate employment and marriage. Prostitutes also risked venereal disease, violence, and possibly compromised their morals and self worth. In the face of all these downfalls, why would a woman choose to engage in prostitution? Victorians argued that it is because these women had moral deficiencies. In fact, many woman did become prostitutes because they desired to engage in activities contrary to Victorian mores such as going to taverns, having sex with multiple partners, and drinking excessively. Dr. William Sanger, a physician in Blackwell Island's hospital for women with venereal disease, conducted a study of prostitutes in New York City in the late 1850s that explored the causes of prostitution in New York. One of the earliest existing studies of prostitution, it is often cited in histories despite its possible inaccuracies.<sup>120</sup> Reflecting some truth in the Victorian stereotype, Sanger found in his study on prostitution that 26% of women became prostitutes because of "inclination." Sanger wrote that inclination included such reasons as enjoying the "merry life", or enjoying sex after being seduced by a lover. Another 6% explained that desire for an easy life led to their decision to engage in prostitution. Sanger also found that 7.5% of prostitutes claimed that women already in the business had encouraged them to become prostitutes, or they had kept company with people who frequented taverns, dance halls, and brothels.<sup>121</sup> New London prostitute Miranda Colvert, who will be discussed later in further detail, most likely grew up in an establishment such as a tavern or brothel that encouraged prostitution. Influenced by the activity she saw, she chose to make her living selling herself, against the will of her parents.<sup>122</sup>

Women with addictions to alcohol were also attracted to prostitution. Sanger found that 9% of women gave desire to drink as a reason they became prostitutes. However, some women who gave desire to drink were categorized under having the inclination to become a prostitute.<sup>123</sup> Prostitution may have appealed to some alcoholics because of the regular access to alcohol and lack of legitimate employment for drunkards. Other women became addicted while working in brothels and taverns where booze ran freely. There are incidences of prostitutes being arrested for drunkenness in New London. Minerva Capola who was convicted of prostitution in 1845, was also sentenced for being drunk to the extent in September 1847 that she was described as “disabled.”<sup>124</sup> Another woman in the prostitution industry arrested for drunkenness, also in September of 1847, was Carolyn Hyde, a resident of the brothel run by Serepta Lewis (Gaulette). It is not clear, however, if she was a prostitute or servant in the household because she lived there with her husband. Working in the prostitution industry was a natural choice for women addicted to alcohol.<sup>125</sup>

Procuring a reputation as a bad woman also drove some women to prostitution. Once labeled a whore, they might lose the financial support of their families or lovers, and were undesirable employees. William Lord Stevens, a Stonington man who sailed out of Mystic in 1850, wrote of the downfall of a sixteen-year-old girl because her employer seduced her. After the entire town discovered the indiscretion, the rumors immediately began that “she had sold herself for gold.” Rather than viewing her as a seduced young woman, or just someone who had premarital sex, the town decided she traded sex for money. The community shunned her, and, “Then from their church they turned her out/ They said disgrace she had brought about/ And she no more should drink their wine/ For she had disgraced their church divine.”<sup>126</sup> Although Stevens did not relate what happened to the girl

after her expulsion, her choices would be limited. Marilyn Wood Hill, in her study of nineteenth century New York, *Their Sister's Keepers*, explains that although sexual reputation was not the most frequent cause of prostitution, it did have an impact. Sanger found that of the women he surveyed, 13% said they became prostitutes because they had run away with a man and were subsequently abandoned, 1.0% claimed they were seduced while on an immigrant ship to America, 0.5% said they were seduced at an immigrant boardinghouse, and 1.5% said they were violated.<sup>127</sup>

Victorian gender roles also limited the amount of money a woman could earn in legitimate professions, making prostitution an appealing option for impoverished women and those trying to support a family without male income. Women only made one third to one half as much as men in comparable positions. These low wages reflected the fact that most women expected to be married eventually and be supported by the wages of a man.<sup>128</sup> Women also had a limited number of occupations opened to them, and they lacked room for advancement. Many women who needed employment while single worked as domestic servants, industrial laborers, or teachers. Viable work for married women in seaport communities included providing services in their own home, such as boarding travelers or taking in other people's laundry.<sup>129</sup> Sewing and making crafts were also an important source of income for women. In the 1853 New London city directory, which recorded only some of the women in the city, nine women were milliners, seven women owned boardinghouses (sometimes fronts for brothels), five women were teachers, three dressmakers, one tailoress, one carpet maker, and one laborer.<sup>130</sup> Timothy Gilfoyle, in his study on prostitution in New York City, found that in 1839, women who had professions before they were prostitutes had all worked in low paying jobs involving domestic service and sewing.<sup>131</sup> In Sanger's study

on New York City prostitution, 26% of women listed destitution specifically as a reason they became prostitutes. Single women, who lacked family financial support had difficulties finding jobs or earning enough to survive.

African-American women, who had less job opportunities than whites due to racism and oppression, were possibly more likely to work in the prostitution industry than white women. An overwhelmingly large number of women arrested for prostitution in New London were African American. In New London, of women arrested for prostitution between 1828 and 1852, approximately 37% arrested were black. This is extraordinarily high when, in 1850, only 3% of the town was African American. Nationally, like today, more African-Americans proportionally found themselves in state prisons than whites. The 1850s census recorded that there were 4643 white males in jail and 801 black males.<sup>132</sup> The total U.S. white population was 19,553,068, meaning approximately 0.02% of whites were incarcerated. People of color accounted only 434,495, but approximately 0.2% were in prison.<sup>133</sup> The proportion of African-American females in prison compared to white females in prison was much higher. In the 1850 Census, there were 87 African-American women in jail, and 115 white women.<sup>134</sup>

While in general, more African Americans were sent to prison proportionally than whites, this was not universally true for prostitution arrests. Interestingly, in New York City, although more African Americans were arrested than white in general, a lower percentage of African Americans than their percentage of the population were arrested for prostitution. Marilyn Wood Hill explains that there was a scarcity of African-American prostitutes in New York, arguing that it was because they were restricted to only black customers, or they avoided the industry, fearing racial violence. She also suggests that New York police may



have arrested black less frequently because blacks were expected to break sexual mores, and overwhelmed police were more concerned with controlling white society.<sup>135</sup>

The high proportion of arrests does not necessarily mean that there were more African-American prostitutes in New London than white ones. It is not surprising if there were, however, since African Americans were more susceptible to poverty. Politically and economically restricted by whites, many African Americans lacked adequate means for employment. Lack of education also contributed to poverty. In New London, 74% of the black women were illiterate whereas only 15% of white women were illiterate.<sup>136</sup> Seafaring was one of a limited number of industries open to African-American men, leaving many African-American women single, or to find a living while their husbands were at sea. Many worked as laundresses and in domestic service.<sup>137</sup> African Americans were also less apt to follow Victorian mores. Many African Americans were less adverse to premarital sex. Lacking community structure to guide them in finding mates as in Africa, many indulged their sexual desires. In many African communities, premarital sex and multiple partners were encouraged. Some of this African culture transferred to Africans in the New World and their decedents.<sup>138</sup>

New London also had a high demand for African-American prostitutes because of the preponderance of non-white whalers. Whaling provided one of the best chances for promotion and employment for African Americans. Not many whites wanted to engage in this dangerous work, and captains often hired based on ability rather than race for this skill based profession.<sup>139</sup> Brothels tended to be segregated, although there were exceptions. New London brothels seemed to either have black or white prostitutes. These prostitutes might have catered to different races besides their own, but it is not likely.<sup>140</sup>

Lacking other work opportunities, sex work was a viable option for African-American men and women. Many African Americans lacked property and wealth, preventing them from becoming permanent residents of a town. Impoverished individuals who were not citizens or did not own property in a particular town were always in peril of being warned out of a town during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries in New England. The warning out system, often used to send impoverished individuals away so they would not become a financial burden to the town, was also used against disorderly persons.<sup>141</sup> John and Catherine Noyes, who were arrested for keeping a house of prostitution in New London in 1843, were transient their whole lives. John Noyes was born in Rhode Island, but was listed as living in the New London County town of Stonington in the 1820s census. A nuisance to his adopted town of Stonington, Noyes was warned to leave in 1824, 1826, and 1833. Often, people who were warned out returned to the town they were sent away from because they preferred living there and had developed community despite lacking the required amount of land or town votes for citizenship. By 1843, Noyes and his wife lived in New London, operating a brothel.<sup>142</sup> Matilda Rhodes, an African American residing in Stonington, was a transient and warned out of Stonington in 1825 and 1826. She was also sentenced to the workhouse for drunkenness and prostitution.<sup>143</sup>

Often, lack of community and family support contributed to the need to prostitute. Sanger found that 8.05% of women in his study said they became prostitutes because their families or husbands treated them poorly. Many of the prostitutes in Sanger's study revealed that they had at least one dead parent, also a contributing cause to poverty and lack of family stability. Of the women surveyed, 67% said their fathers were dead and 62% said their mothers were dead. Of those who had parents that were alive, 30% of women said their

father's were intemperate and 17% said their mothers were intemperate. Many women also left abusive or drunk husbands preferring prostitution to domestic abuse. Sanger found that 103 of 2000 women said that they did not live with their husbands because they were abusive, and 45 more said they did not reside with their husbands because they were drunkards. Many women, who found themselves without reliable husbands or parents, resorted to prostitution.

One woman who became a prostitute after leaving her marriage was Hannah Hide. An African American, she married Thomas Billings in Colchester on November 19, 1826. However, she left him in 1833 and moved to New London. It is unknown why she left her husband. When Hannah first arrived in New London, it is possible that she immediately began to earn a living prostituting. Alone, transient, single, and black, in an urban seaport, it would have been difficult for her to procure any other kind of work. In 1847, she was arrested for running a house of ill fame. After fifteen years in New London, she had accrued enough leverage and capital to operate her own brothel, which was listed as being on Potter Street, near the water in a district of boardinghouses (see fig. 1). Hannah Billings was not only involved in prostitution, but was arrested for theft in 1852 as well.<sup>144</sup> Hannah never returned to her husband. Thomas Billings remained in Colchester, never remarried, and died, alone in 1866 at the age of 66. Hannah never divorced her husband, and kept her married last name, Billings.<sup>145</sup> Petitioning the court for divorce at this time cost money, and was only available for certain offenses such as adultery, and violence, and abandonment.<sup>146</sup> If she could not prove that Thomas committed any of these offenses, or did not have the funds for divorce, she must have seen running away to start a new life as the best option. For

Hannah, prostitution provided her with an opportunity to survive after escaping an undesirable marriage.

Elizabeth and Sara Richards, both black prostitutes living in Frank Sanson's brothel in 1848 when the New London sheriff arrested the entire household, were only teenagers at the time. Their parents were James Kellogg (Richards), and Laura Ann Davis. The couple married in Colchester on September 1, 1822.<sup>147</sup> At a time when these girls should have still been under the guardianship of their parents, they were regarded as transients in the New London court records, without parents, living in New London. It is possible that they lived in a brothel instead of at home because of family difficulties since both sisters left home. Any of the reasons described above, however, were possible.

### ***Profiting from the Labor of Prostitutes and Organizing the Sex Industry***

Business people in New London profited from the sex industry by encouraging prostitutes to frequent their taverns, organizing places for prostitutes and customers to have sex, or operating a brothel where prostitutes lived for a portion of their earnings. Lonely sailors also purchased food and alcohol in taverns in which sailors expected to find women as well. A sailor looking to purchase sex could go to one of these types of establishments in New London, or find a common streetwalker. These women, unaffiliated with a brothel, who were looking for customers, could also pick up men in taverns and saloons. The couples would have sexual relations in a street ally, or boardinghouses or taverns that rented specifically by the hour or night.<sup>148</sup> Women who frequented these taverns were welcome. Their presence was an incentive for men to stay and drink, providing owners with extra income.

Landlords also earned money from the sex industry by renting rooms to madams and prostitutes. Landlords often charged high rent to madams. Occasionally, there was public concern that landlords were part of the industry, and just as immoral as prostitutes.<sup>149</sup> Troubled by landlords who rented to prostitutes, the city of New Haven prosecuted those who rented homes that were subsequently used as houses of ill fame. In 1865, however, the Connecticut Supreme Court of Errors ruled that landlords could only be charged if they knew of the sex going on, and could prevent their house from being used for prostitution.<sup>150</sup> This ruling protected landlords, who were often of the middle class and would have more political power than their tenants. All of the brothel owners arrested in New London rented their establishments.<sup>151</sup>

Operating a brothel directly gave managers greater control over prostitutes and their earnings. Managers rented rooms, provided food, attracted customers, provided a measure of protection, and perhaps acted as surrogate relatives to prostitutes. Mostly women operated and ran brothels, often by themselves, and sometimes with a male partner. This is true of many port cities in the United States and England at that time. In New London, between 1843 and 1852, the Justice of the Peace arrested seven women for operating brothels, six male and female partners, and one man.<sup>152</sup> The man arrested, Frank Sanson, had been charged previously for operating a brothel with a woman. Men, however, did not become an important part of organizing the prostitution industry in the role of pimps until the late nineteenth century.<sup>153</sup> Operating a brothel was one of the only management positions open to women and African Americans during this time. In an already illicit profession, it was acceptable for these oppressed groups to take upon the intense management roles required of a madam.<sup>154</sup>

Women and men who the New London Justice of the Peace arrested conjointly for operating houses of ill fame often controlled separate aspects of the business. In other situations, women oversaw the management of the prostitutes, while men operated a bar in conjunction with the brothel. Sometimes one individual did less work than the other. A husband or wife might even be arrested simply because he or she was married to a brothel operator. New London prostitutes and madams often married mariners because these were the men they met, and these they were in the same social class. The frequent absence of seamen husbands gave women freedom, but also the need to earn extra income through illicit professions.

Jemima King's life provides a view into the world of managing a brothel. An example of a madam who operated a brothel single handedly, her tough demeanor lived on in New London's collective memory. King was the first person charged with a prostitution related crime in fourteen years, arrested the most frequently, and the first madam in New London to be fined one hundred dollars for her trespasses. In 1916, *New London Day* reporter, R. B. Wall, described the legacy she left the city, which will be explored later. In 1842, King was first arrested as part of a group of six men and women for maintaining houses of ill fame. King, however, was the only person with enough evidence against her to be convicted of being a madam. The Justice of the Peace, Henry Douglass, fined her fifty dollars, and required her to practice good behavior. It is not known if Jemima tried to follow through with the Judge's request. In January of 1844 she attracted the attention of the New London judicial system once again for again operating a brothel on Bradley Street, and she received a twenty-dollar fine (see fig. 1). In April of 1844, Justice John Grace seemed to grow frustrated with Jemima King's continued flouting of the law. When brought before him

again, he fined her fifty dollars for operating her brothel. Because Ephraim Douglass, who's relation to King is unknown, had agreed to help pay the fine, failed to procure the funds, Justice Grace sentenced Jemima to twenty days in the town workhouse. After her release from the workhouse, Jemima again returned to operating a brothel. The day of her release from prison, she was arrested again for maintaining a house of ill fame. Because she was a repeat offender, Judge Grace fined one hundred dollars, the highest fee the New London Justices of the Peace had charged a brothel owner to that date. Unable to pay, and unable to find someone to front her the money, Justice Grace sent King to the common goal in New London for twenty more days. There are no records that show what happened to Jemima King after her release from prison this time. King's arrests show that the New London Justices did not want to just collect money from King, they wanted to eradicate her establishments and the prostitution, violence, and rowdiness they encouraged. Charging fees that were difficult for madams to pay off, New London decided it wanted to use fines and imprisonment to eradicate prostitution.

Although the records of King's 1844 arrests show that she was married, King operated her brothels independently. In January of 1844, she was arrested with her husband, Israel King, and he was charged with maintaining a house of ill fame as well. Israel, however, was not convicted, while Jemima was. The decision of the Judge to exonerate Israel of maintaining a brothel, even though he was married to a madam, is curious. Justice Henry Douglass did not even bother to arrest Israel in 1842, even though he arrested two other couples for operating houses of ill fame. Justice John Grace issued a warrant for Israel's arrest simply because he was legally married to Jemima. Once in custody, his innocence was apparently revealed. In her following two arrests, she was mentioned as being

the wife of Israel, but he was not subsequently arrested. In the two latter arrests, Jemima was unable to pay her fines, and turned to other men for help. Israel's lack of financial assistance may mean that he did not contribute much more income to the household, that he was estranged from Jemima, or at sea. The real reason is unknown. Women, especially married women, were not supposed to become entrepreneurs according to Victorian gender roles. Married women could not even own property. Jemima, however, apparently ran the business without his assistance.<sup>155</sup>

Jemima King was most likely the "Mother King" that *New London Day* journalist, R. B. Wall, chose to remember in his article "Historic Place, Truman's Brook and Vicinity."<sup>156</sup> Wall's account cannot be taken as completely factual; he does not site specific sources. In the beginning of his article he stated that he received much of his information from old editions of the *New London Morning Star*, a statement that cannot be confirmed. Although Wall does not give the exact date of when the madam lived that he is writing about, it is clear from his information that many of the events he described happened during the 1830s. For example, Wall wrote that Mother King leased a house to use as a brothel from Jabez Ryon on the outskirts of town near Truman's brook (see fig. 2). This transaction was probably in the 1830s because in 1840 Ryon unexpectedly left New London, leaving his property to the town, which was sold at auction to Timothy Sizer.<sup>157</sup> Although Jemima King was not arrested for maintaining a brothel during the 1830s, this does not mean that she was a model citizen until 1842, the time of her first arrest. As described in Chapter 1, New London did not arrest anyone in the 1830s for prostitution, which was most likely due to neglect by the Justices of the Peace and the Sheriff rather than an absence of prostitution. Although it is not absolute that the Mother King that Wall described was Jemima King, it is likely.



Wall began his article by describing Mother King's brothel as a "rendezvous for drunken sailors and the degraded elements of the city's population." In describing the infamous madam herself, Wall uses male descriptors. She was "large of frame, with red hair and course features and eyes penetrating and ferocious." She was able to take care of herself and her girls, according to Wall. "When sailors quarreled and fought in her place she used her big fists, a club, an axe, or anything she could lay her hands on to end to disorder." King was obviously a woman who could take care of herself not only physically, but also financially. As a brothel owner, she took on the male responsibility of providing for women and running a business. The memory of King and her obvious power mandated a masculine figure. Wall did not even mention her having a husband, which would have ruined his Amazonian portrait.

According to Wall, King was a businessman owning multiple establishments throughout her career. He mentioned her owning a "resort" on Bank Street, north of its intersection with Pearl Street, placing it near the Customs House (see fig. 1). This brothel was on the waterfront, and King faced ridicule when the body of a dead sailor was found under the wharf behind her establishment.<sup>158</sup> Sometime after this tragedy, Wall wrote that King was badgered until she left New London, and moved to Frog Pond in Waterford. She lived quietly in this neighboring town in a small house until her death. However, the only location that the New London Justice of the Peace Records mention for the real King was a house on Bradly Street in 1844 (see fig. 1). She could have operated there between moving from her Bank Street resort to Frog Pond, but it is impossible to know.<sup>159</sup>

One brothel manager, whose career reflected the role men played in operating houses of ill fame, was Frank Sanson. Frank operated brothels with other women and alone

throughout his life. Born in 1790, in New London, Frank Sanson was an African American. Frank Sanson's confrontations with the New London court system began as a teenager when he fathered the child of Jane Stevens. Stevens, unable to financially care for the child, had to ask for the town for support. New London, in turn, ordered Frank Sanson in 1819 to pay for part of the expense of raising the child born in June of that year. Regardless of impregnating another woman, Frank Sanson married Peggy in 1824.<sup>160</sup> During the 1830s, the Sansons ran a boardinghouse in New London together. Frank Sanson, however, could not remain faithful to Peggy. In 1838, he was brought to court for failing to pay \$60 to a woman whom he recently impregnated.<sup>161</sup>

In 1840, Peggy had had enough of his philandering, and filed for divorce. She supported her case that he cheated on her with evidence. She claimed in 1839 that he had had sex with two other women, Anstus Van Dorus, and another person unknown to Peggy.<sup>162</sup> Asserting her economic contributions to the marriage, she asked for half of their property. Although it is unclear whether Peggy was awarded the property she asked for, the state did grant her a divorce. Divorces before the Civil War in America were infrequent.<sup>163</sup> During this time period, divorce was only possible in Connecticut in cases of desertion, violence, adultery, or alcoholism. Although women initiated most divorce petitions, courts rarely awarded women property during proceedings, making divorce a poor economic decision.<sup>164</sup> Peggy's role as a businesswoman may have given her enough confidence in her ability to survive financially independently. After the divorce, Peggy managed a boardinghouse on Lyme Turnpike, a continuation of Bank Street, near Truman's Brook (see fig. 2).<sup>165</sup> Peggy began to call in her debts from sailors who had stayed in her boardinghouse but continued to accrue debt by buying groceries on account. One man she took to court for debt was Cape

Verdean whaler Antoine DeSaint for fifteen dollars.<sup>166</sup> Although the divorce meant consolidating her assets, her efforts to collect debts highlighted Peggy's role in running the boardinghouse business. Peggy continued to operate a boardinghouse for mariners in New London until she died on January 25, 1851, at the age of 61.<sup>167</sup> Unlike many Victorian women, Peggy was not afraid to assert her rights in the public sphere. She operated a business, brought people who wronged her to court, and divorced her inadequate husband.

Frank Sanson moved on from his partnership with Peggy to operate his own house of ill fame with Anstus Van Dorus. Frank and Anstus may have started a brothel together or Frank joined Anstus in her preexisting enterprise, utilizing the skills he gained while operating the boardinghouse with Peggy. The New London Justice of the Peace convicted Anstus and Frank of maintaining a house of ill fame in 1843. Anstus Van Dorus was also known as Anstus Sanson, according to the court records. Either officially married or informally united, it is clear Anstus felt bonded to Sanson as a wife. The court fined both Anstus and Frank twenty-five dollars each, which they henceforth paid, suggesting that they had some success in their business.<sup>168</sup> Sometime after their arrest, Frank and Anstus split ways, and Frank continued to do what he was good at, maintaining houses of ill fame.<sup>169</sup>

In 1848, Frank again came to the attention of the New London Justice of the Peace, who not only arrested him, but all of the women who lived in his brothel: Elizabeth Richards, Sara Richards, Lucretia Fowler, and Sophia Manuel. All these women were black or mulatto. The Justice of the Peace sent the cases of Frank and the women living in his brothel to the New London County Court for judgment. Each girl received fines and or imprisonment. Frank Sanson was fined fifty dollars.<sup>170</sup> Sanson was also charged at that time with selling alcohol without a license. Alcohol was a good source of income for brothel

owners, and it made men more likely to purchase sex. The warrant for his arrest stated that he sold “one glass of Brandy, one glass of Rum, one glass of gin, one glass of whiskey, and one glass of wine” during the night in question.<sup>171</sup> Sometime after his arrest, he began a relationship with an African American named Betty and two children, who lived with him according to the 1860 census. Betty died in New London in 1861, at the age of 61. Frank died three months later at the age of 71. Sanson was a staple of the New London sex industry for most of his life, working with other women to manage brothels and boardinghouses, and participating in illicit sex himself.<sup>172</sup> For African Americans, operating brothels provided opportunity for income and self employment.

### ***Violence and New London Prostitution***

The court records of the arrest of Sarah Jeffery lists all the faults a nineteenth-century justice could find in a brothel owner. “Sarah Jeffery is an idle, dysolute, profane and disorderly person, a common Drunkard...is in constant habit of reviling and profane speaking...Also keeps a notorious and disorderly House, is constantly engaged in quarrelling and fighting.”<sup>173</sup> As Sarah Jeffery’s arrest and Wall’s description of Mother King’s brothel related, the world of prostitution was fraught with violence disrespect, abuse, and hostility. Readily available alcohol, personal animosities, and unrestrained behavior led to violence. Prostitutes and madams fought one another, causing real physical injuries. Not only did fights among sailors occur regularly in New London establishments, but sailors and other customers assaulted prostitutes. As “fallen” women, prostitutes lacked the protection of an ideology that prevented attacks upon domestic, good women. Often seen as sexual objects, some men asserted their dominance over prostitutes through sex and violence. This is not to

say that a husband or family could not assault the wife or daughter striving for ideal Victorian womanhood. Prostitutes, however, as public women, were at risk of being attacked and abused in ways that respectable women would not be.

In New London in 1844, two men attacked Mary Prince, a mulatto, who appeared in the court system the following year for prostitution charges. Mary Prince was at risk in a society in which she was underprivileged both as a sex worker and as a woman of color. Born in 1822 to Jabez and Jane Williams, Mary was baptized into the Groton Second Baptist Church under the name Mary Jane Prince. In 1839, Mary moved to New London, and became a member of the local Baptist church. Registering under the name, Mary Jane Niles, it is probable that she moved to New London with a husband, although not officially married. Before 1844, she changed her name back to Mary Prince, suggesting her lover left her, resulting in the need to prostitute herself. In June of 1844, John Brussel and Charles Freeman assaulted Mary Prince. These two men attacked Prince and covered her in tar. The County Court of New London County sentenced both men to thirty days in the common goal. Prince was then arrested in June of 1845 for prostitution. It is unknown whether she was a prostitute when she was attacked. If she was not, this attack could be related to her entry into prostitution.<sup>174</sup>

The publicity surrounding court cases of violence in the sex industry, such as the trial concerning prostitute Helen Jewett's murder in 1836, and personal experience with violence, prompted many brothel owners to seek male protection. Helen Jewett, who gained a moderate amount of renown as a popular brothel prostitute, was most likely killed by Richard Robinson. A regular customer of Jewett's, Robinson was accused of killing her at night in the brothel where she worked. Jewett was found dead from a blow to her head with an axe,

and one fire. The ensuing trial opened discussions about the use of prostitution among young middle-class males, especially in New York City. Robinson had supporters who argued that he should not be sent to prison because he was seduced by a vile creature who deserved her punishment. For many peoples among the middle-class, the crime was repulsive, and encouraged discussions on the horrors of prostitution, and the unfortunate results a life of vice had on young men who left their families in the country for city life.<sup>175</sup> In a report in *The New London Gazette* on the murder, the article marveled at the fact that Robinson's father, of Durham, Connecticut "is an excellent citizen, and has frequently been a representative in the Legislature from that town."<sup>176</sup> Rather than be shocked that a prostitute died, the surprise for the middle-class seems to have been in that a young man from a respectable family committed murder. Robinson was in fact acquitted, and the murder was never solved. For the middle class, this was a story about the degradation of youth in urban centers, not the risks prostitutes encountered in these cities. For brothel owners and prostitutes, this event further demonstrated the need for male protection.

The threat of violence in seaports around America provided strong incentive for prostitutes and madams to hire men for physical protection. Not all madams and prostitutes had the strength to fight off a drunken sailor, as did Mother King. After hearing about cases of violence in other brothels, or experiencing it themselves, female brothel owners and prostitutes, who felt they couldn't protect themselves from male attacks, hired men to do it for them. These men, who protected brothels and individual women, were known as fancy men, or pimps.<sup>177</sup> Men who worked in brothels exerted much less agency over the women, acting as an employee of a madam, unless the man operated the brothel himself or with a wife, such as Frank Sanson.<sup>178</sup> Many fancy men worked as servants as well: cleaning,

buying groceries, repairing the house, and serving guests. Their presence alone could discourage would be attackers. Prostitutes who were not associated with a specific brothel and who wanted protection, would find men who would protect them in return for money and often sex. In New York City, the profession of the pimp developed in the 1830s when a great deal of violence occurred against prostitutes. By the mid-nineteenth century, they were a common part of New York life on the streets.<sup>179</sup>

Demonstrating the role of men in the sex industry, men unrelated to prostitutes posted bail or paid fines for women charged with prostitution. Of the forty-five total arrests for prostitution related crimes between 1827 and 1852, there were eight cases in which an unrelated man paid for, or said he would pay for a prostitute's release. Their exact relationship to these women is unknown. It is possible they were pimps or simply lovers. These men could also have been involved in operating the brothels.<sup>180</sup>

One man involved in the prostitution industry in a mysterious capacity was Mathew Loops. Loops visited multiple houses of ill fame during the late 1840s and early 1850s. His presence was frequent enough that the New London Justice of the Peace subpoenaed him in five different court cases against madams and prostitutes as a witness to their crimes. All of the women in cases in which he served as a witness maintained or worked in brothels on Bradley or Potter Streets, both near the waterfront in the vice neighborhood north of State Street (see fig. 1). He also witnessed a fight between two prostitutes, Ellen Phillips and Sophia Manuel in 1847. From these details it is difficult to discern what role Loops played in this underworld that would make him a credible witness in court cases against five women in four separate brothels and a fight between prostitutes. One event that sheds some light on his role is that the New London Justice of the Peace issued a warrant for Mathew Loops arrest

for fornicating with Mary Prince, a prostitute, in 1850. It is possible that Loops was Prince's lover and pimp, providing protection and business for Prince, while receiving money and sex in return. As a pimp, Loops could have had prostitutes that worked in or visited many establishments in the Bradly and Potter Street area, making him a presence in multiple saloons, brothels, and boardinghouses. Loops could also have been an employee of a madam. Loops could also simply have been a customer, who frequented many brothels and saloons. Whatever his role, Mathew Loops had intimate knowledge of the workings of the New London prostitution industry, which the New London Justice of the Peace apparently used to his advantage to convict and punish New London's women of ill repute.<sup>181</sup>

Workers in the prostitution industry did not just have to be concerned with violence between customers and prostitutes, but between women in the industry as well. Working in a highly competitive, degrading, and exploitive field, brothel owners and prostitutes physically fought one another over a variety of concerns. Marilyn Wood Hill, in her study *Their Sister's Keepers*, looking at prostitution in New York City, argues that prostitutes fought over many issues: who was the prettiest, who had the best complexion, and who held the most power and influence in a certain geographical area. According to Hill, violence erupted after long held "smoldering frustrations, jealousies, and antagonisms" boiled over. Women in brothels, living in close quarters with other women, especially developed frustrations towards madams concerning living arrangements and business related issues. An extreme example of violence between a madam and a prostitute happened in New York City when madam Catherine Hoffman killed one of her residents, Mary Drake. Drake's crime was that she refused a man's proposition while she was on the street.<sup>182</sup> New London's Justice of the



Peace arrested and tried many prostitutes and brothel owners for assaults and acts of violence against each other.

Sophia Manuel, who was arrested in February of 1848 for residing in Frank Sanson's brothel, was often a victim of abuse. She was beaten so badly on two separate occasions that her attackers were arrested. On July 27, 1847, Ellen Phillips attacked Sophia Manuel by "challenging, quarrelling, and assaulting and at the same time striking Sophia Manuel repeated blows on the face and head." In the second case involving Manuel, on January 4, 1848, Hannah Billings, a New London madam, after punching Manuel, "did clench and take her by the throat, whereby the said Sophia was greatly injured." On February 11, of 1848, Sophia was arrested for living in the brothel of Frank Sanson at least a month prior to the arrest. It is possible that Manuel resided in Hannah's Bradly Street brothel, and then moved to Sanson's Water Street brothel after this attack, which would allow for the allotted one month period that the courts insisted that she lived in Frank Sanson's brothel (see fig. 1).<sup>183</sup>

In addition to madams beating prostitutes, and prostitutes beating other prostitutes, rival madams also got into physical confrontations. In September of 1852, Clara Antone and Serepta Lewis, both madams who owned houses of prostitution on Bradly Street, were both charged separately with assault upon the other. The reasoning behind the fight is unknown. Two rival brothels so close in proximity, with a limited amount of customers must have had conflicts. Nine days after their fight, The Justice of the Peace issued a warrant for Serepta Lewis' arrest on September 27, 1852, charging her, and a woman who lived in her brothel with prostitution related crimes. It is possible that the violence pushed the community to confront issues of vice and prostitution in the area.<sup>184</sup>

There are other cases in New London in which prostitutes fought with other women whose role in the sex industry cannot be identified. They could be prostitutes, madams, or angry relatives of customers. Serepta Lewis, madam on Bradley Street, and her sister and prostitute, Rhoda Lewis, violently attacked Elizabeth Oliver “clenching her...by the throat and turning off her bonnet, and shaking, beating, striking, and quarreling” with her. Because Serepta Lewis was a madam, it is possible Oliver was a resident in Lewis’s brothel but her identity is unclear. Confirmed as being a madam in 1848 when arrested and convicted, Clara Antone, who fought with fellow madam Serepta Lewis, most often appeared in court for fighting. In 1847, Rachel Lee, attacked Clara Antone by “throwing her down on the floor, also at the same time, threatening that she would kill her.” Ellen Lands beat Antone on November 1, 1852, and then she “did stomp upon her with her feet to the great injury of the said Clara Antone.” As a madam, these women who attacked Antone could have lived in her brothel at one point or another, suggesting that Antone was not the most judicious brothel manager.<sup>185</sup> Clearly, the lifestyle prostitutes and madams led bred such fears, frustrations, and animosity that quite violent fights broke out among these women.

### ***Prostitutes and Their Families: Children, Communities, and Men***

The typical profile of a New London prostitute was young, unmarried, childless, and without family support. A good number of prostitutes, however, had one or more of these things contrary to Victorian expectations. In Victorian society, the role of good wife and mother was congruent with sexual repression, which a prostitute who was also a wife could not fulfill. The reality was that in all classes, there was a great variety among how closely women followed the ideal. In the seaport community, middle-class wives of captains and

seamen had to raise their children alone or with other family members and friends while their husbands were at sea. Other wives, especially those married to whaling captains, sometimes left their children on shore and went with their husbands to sea.<sup>186</sup> This reveals an upper-class view that a woman's first duty was as wife rather than mother. For maritime women of all classes, gender roles had to be stretched. Society divided the roles of women between those who had illicit sex, and those who were good wives and mothers. Prostitutes, as women, also took on the roles of wife and mother in a different capacity. For prostitutes with children, fathers were usually absent. Like the middle-class women whose husbands went to sea, prostitutes often had to band together to care for their children.

To many Victorians, having a prostitute in the family would be a horrific stigma. Sanger, in introducing his study, related the shame and shock many families felt when they discovered a daughter was a prostitute. "He who believes that the malady in his neighbor's family to-day may visit his own to-morrow ...a vice which has blighted the happiness of one parents, and ruined the character of one daughter, may produce, must inevitably produce, the same sad results in another circle."<sup>187</sup> Some women, who had families, did maintain relationships, as shown by the willingness of some relatives to post bail for convicted prostitutes and brothel owners. When Laura Daniels was arrested for prostitution in 1840, multiple family members joined together to pay her bail so that she would not have to stay in prison while she awaited a trial with the County Court of New London County. Subsequently, Daniels was able to avoid further punishment by not appearing for her court date. Thanks to her family, Daniels escaped further fines or imprisonment. The New London Justice of the Peace fined Martha Butler Wilson in June of 1844 for maintaining a brothel the hefty sum of fifty dollars. If she neglected to pay her fine, she would face time in

prison. It was not her husband, however, but other relatives, Lucious L. Butler, and William Butler who aided Martha Wilson by paying her fine.<sup>188</sup>

Prostitutes were always at risk of becoming pregnant, particularly with the ineffective birth control methods available. Prostitutes also tried to avoid giving birth to children through abortion. William Sanger, in his study of New York City prostitutes found that of 2000 women, 31 single women, 7 married women, and 2 widows admitted to having abortions. Sanger argued, rightfully so, that the actual numbers were certainly much higher because women would be afraid to admit to the police officer who conducted the survey that they had abortions.<sup>189</sup> When abortive methods failed, women were burdened with extra incentives to continue working as prostitutes to earn money to care for their children. Many prostitutes also had children from previous marriages and sexual indiscretions. According to Sanger's study on prostitution in New York City, 30% of single prostitutes, 73% of married prostitutes, and 73% of widowed prostitutes told Sanger's surveyors that they had children.<sup>190</sup> This kind of statistical data is unavailable for New London prostitutes but we can infer the percentages of prostitutes with children were high.

Ironically, the brothel provided an atmosphere in which many single women could work together to care for children. In 1850, Serepta Lewis's brothel housed three other single prostitutes with children, and one couple with their daughter. Lewis, an African-American madam, is listed as running the household at the young age of 19 in the 1850 census. Serepta had her own one-year-old daughter, Victoria Lewis living with her. Serepta's sister, Rhoda, aged 17, also lived in the household, with her one-year-old, Alberta. Mary Freeman, an African American woman aged 22, lived there as well with her infant son William B. Freeman. Carolyn Hyde, aged 22, and her husband, James Leonard Hyde, with

their daughter, resided in the brothel possibly as servants. This couple, older than Serepta, was not listed as the head of the household in the 1850 census, suggesting that they were staying in the brothel with Serepta's consent.

Ann Pennyman, a 19-year-old African American, moved into Serepta's brothel in 1850, immediately after giving birth to a child. She spent four months in the Norwich County jail for residing in a house of ill fame starting in December of 1849. She happened to be there when the 1850 census taker recorded her residence. Very pregnant, Ann Pennyman probably sought refuge in the brothel of Serepta to give birth to her daughter, who was one-month-old when the census taker came to Serepta's brothel in 1850. Having moved from one city to the other between the time it took for the census taker to finish his census of the county, Pennyman was recorded accidentally as living in two cities. In the absence of the man who impregnated these women, prostitutes, despite competition and animosities that often led to violence, could take care of each other and each other's children in this dangerous environment.<sup>191</sup>

Many prostitutes did get married either while they sold sex or after. Victorian society maintained that women would be unable to marry once they fell into prostitution. Sanger argued that most women died within four years of becoming a prostitute, thereby preventing any long term marriages or marital escape from prostitution. In New London, some prostitutes did die at a relatively young age. Elizabeth Richards, who lived in Frank Sanson's brothel, arrested in 1848, died in March of 1850 in New London.<sup>192</sup> Lucinda Fowler, also a prostitute in Frank Sanson's brothel in 1848, died July 11, 1849 of what New London vital records call "dissipation", which most literally means she perished from a life of vice and sin. It was more likely she died from venereal disease. Despite Sanger's bleak

predictions, and the hazardous realities of prostitution, many women were married while prostituting or lived long lives in which they married years after become prostitutes.

Marilyn Wood Hill, in her study on prostitution in New York City, *Their Sister's Keepers*, argues that prostitutes did often get married and it was possible to return to working-class respectability through marriage. People in the lower classes were more apt to view prostitution as a way to earn money and income, rather than a sign of personal immorality. Hill relates that The Water Street Home for Refuge in New York City recorded many instances of prostitutes marrying men who knew of their past in the nineteenth century. Hill notes that it was not even unusual for prostitutes to practice prostitution while married. Sanger discovered in his nineteenth-century interview of 2000 New York City prostitutes that 490 women said that they were married while prostituting. There were many situations that would result in married women engaging in prostitution. One scenario was that even though these women were married, they were separated from their husbands either through circumstance or estrangement. Of the 490 women Sanger found that said they were married, 419 said that they currently did not reside with their husbands. Of the 419 women, catering to many types of men, 68 women said that their husbands currently were at sea. Women who were married to mariners often had to find ways to support themselves, which sometimes resulted in prostitution. While their husbands were at sea, they often had no source of income. Prostitution was not necessarily a result of men being at sea. Many sailors married prostitutes because they then had a home to return to during their infrequent shore leaves, and they did not have to worry about supporting their women. Of the 490 women who said they were married, 71, however, said they were currently residing with their husbands. These women might be living with men who specifically married prostitutes so that they could live

off of their wife's income, resulting in a relationship of prostitute and pimp. In other cases, women might have had to work as prostitutes to simply help pay the bills.

In New London, 5 of the 19 women who worked as prostitutes between 1827 and 1850, not just madams, in New London, are known to have been legally married sometime in their lives.<sup>193</sup> More, however, probably had long-term relationships considering common law marriage was also popular with the lower classes. One prostitutes in New London who married soon after an arrest for prostitution was Ann Pennyman, who lived in Serepta Lewis's brothel when she gave birth to her daughter in June of 1850. In September of that year, Pennyman married William Howard of New Bedford, Massachusetts in New London. Howard may have been a whaler because he was from New Bedford, which was like New London, one of the centers of the industry. His work probably brought him to New London where he met Pennyman in the brothels or saloons. Perhaps he was the father of the child, or Pennyman was more apt to find a male partner after the birth of her daughter. After 1850, there are no further records of Pennyman being arrested for prostitution, possibly meaning she gave up prostitution to remain faithful to her husband. It is not known what came to be of Pennyman and Howard's marriage. It is known that Pennyman remarried in 1858 to James Thompson of New London. Her ability to marry twice as a known prostitute and unwed mother shows that among sailors and the lower class, chastity and virginity were not prerequisites for marriage.<sup>194</sup>

Eliza Uncas, unlike Ann Pennyman, married years after her first arrest for prostitution. She was sent to the common goal at 21 in 1845, and mistaken for a girl living in Frank Sanson's Brothel in 1848. She married James A. Simpson in Preston on December 24, 1863, suggesting that she had moved to Preston, perhaps leaving behind her past and finding

a legitimate occupation. It is possible that she continued working in the sex industry in some capacity considering that Preston was a waterfront community that also had its own prostitution community.<sup>195</sup>

Miranda Colvert Beckwith's story reflected the familial tensions and reconciliation a prostitute could experience. Miranda was raised in a family involved with prostitution and married twice while working as a known prostitute. Miranda Colvert, a white woman, was born in 1826 and raised in a New London brothel. Her parents, Maranda and Ledyard Colbert, were arrested for maintaining a house of ill fame in 1842, although the New London Justice of the Peace did not convict them of the crime. Miranda Colvert's mother, Maranda Colbert, might have been a prostitute herself. She was convicted of adultery in September of 1847 for having sex with Timothy Beckwith. Miranda herself, influenced by the people around her, became unruly as a child. The New London Justice of the Peace issued a warrant for her arrest for disobeying her parents as a minor when she was 16 or 17.<sup>196</sup>

In May of 1845, when Miranda was eighteen, the New London Justice of the Peace convicted her of being a common prostitute, and sent her to the common goal for twenty days. Perhaps her problems with her parents were at the root of her decision to become a prostitute. A month after her arrest she married William Beckwith, a mariner from Waterford. The couple may have met in the saloons of New London. It is clear William Beckwith enjoyed taverns because he was sent to the common goal in May 1845 for drunkenness and in July of 1845, a month after his marriage.<sup>197</sup>

Marital bliss did not last long for William and Miranda Beckwith. In 1847 Miranda Beckwith was arrested for committing adultery by sleeping with Henry Beckwith (his relationship to William Beckwith is uncertain). While the New London County County



Court was waiting to pass sentence on Miranda, who faced three-years in prison for adultery, Henry Beckwith and his neighbor and possibly employer, Peter Ashcroft paid Miranda's bail, enabling to leave prison. At her next trial date, however, Miranda and Henry Beckwith failed to appear before the court even though they were called three times. In this way, Miranda avoided a three-year prison term. Miranda and Henry Beckwith then appeared together in the marriage records. They became husband and wife on November 9, 1847. Henry Beckwith was a farmer in Waterford who possibly worked for Peter Ashcroft. Ashcroft was listed as living next door to Beckwith, as a farmer who owned property. Beckwith was not listed as owning property, but he was listed as being a farmer. It is probable that he leased land from Ashcroft. Ashcroft himself was in his sixties and lived alone only with his wife. He would have needed farmhands. Beckwith, wanting to get Miranda out of prison, but lacking the funds to do so, asked Ashcroft for assistance.<sup>198</sup>

Henry Beckwith's relation to William Beckwith, Miranda's first husband is unclear. There were two people by the name of William Beckwith residing in Waterford, where the William who married Miranda lived, in the 1850's census. One William Beckwith was listed as a twenty-five-year-old mariner living with Henry Beckwith and Miranda Beckwith in the 1850s census. He was married to Gertrude, and had his own five-month-old child. If this was the William Miranda married, then he most likely went to sea, and during his absence, Miranda slept with his relative, Henry, likely his brother. Somehow, the family reconfigured itself so that William remarried Gertrude and lived with Henry and Miranda. The other William Beckwith was 31-year-old mariner, who resided with Mary Beckwith and their three-year-old child.<sup>199</sup>

While married to Henry Beckwith, it is known that Miranda continued prostituting herself. In 1848, Miranda pled guilty to living in brothels at various times “within six months prior” to December 1848. It is unknown how Henry Beckwith felt about Miranda engaging in prostitution. It is possible the couple wanted her to earn money in this way. It is also possible that their marriage fell apart for a period, but this is not likely. Convicted of prostitution by the New London County Court, which gave out harsher punishment to prostitutes than the New London Justice of the Peace, Miranda spent two months in prison for prostitution. In the 1850 census, Miranda was listed as living with Henry Beckwith. The rest of her life story is unknown.<sup>200</sup>

For African Americans and women who had less work options, prostitution provided a living wage. Managing brothels allowed these people to own businesses when they could not otherwise. For the lower-classes, prostitution was a more acceptable profession. Some prostitutes found spouses and continued relations with their families. For many women, however, prostitution provided a method of earning enough income to escape abusive or otherwise unacceptable husbands and relatives. The people working in the sex industry built their own networks and communities, often including children. Sex work, however, often resulted in violent relationships, venereal disease, exploitation, stigmatization, jail time, and imprisonment. For many women, however, it was the best chance they had for survival.

## *Conclusion*

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Studying seamen and prostitutes together in the larger social context is essential to understanding the relationship between sex workers and customers, and the forces that fuel the sex industry. What many Victorians failed to see was that it was their own society that drove many women to prostitution. Underlying problems such as low female work wages, the social exile of sexually illicit women, and racism against African Americans resulted in many women choosing to become prostitutes. Addressing these issues, except possibly racism, would have been contradictory to the beliefs that upheld Victorian ideology. Rather than tackling the underlying social problems, Victorians fought against their manifestation: prostitution. Because Victorians saw female sexual transgressions as criminal, they imprisoned prostitutes. However, men who paid for sex were rarely forcefully condemned despite their equal role in the industry.

Marginalized seamen and prostitutes looked outside of Victorian society to meet sexual and financial needs. Although seamen used women for sex, they often sought companionship as well. It can be surmised, however, that prostitutes generally desired money rather than company from their customers. Seamen saw beyond the Victorian view of the “fallen” woman, identifying multiple social roles and functions of prostitutes. Because the lower classes viewed prostitution as a method of survival, rather than necessarily immoral, prostitutes could marry lower-class men, especially seamen. Many sailors already temporarily placed the roles of wife, girlfriend, and mother upon sex workers, not viewing them as immoral until prostitutes cheated them.

The reality of prostitution did match up somewhat with Victorian stereotypes. Women were at risk for venereal disease, and some did die at a young age as Victorians surmised. A subculture to Victorian ideology existed among the lower classes, in which long-term relationships existed without marriage, and marrying a prostitute was sometimes acceptable. Maintaining strict gender roles was not possible for the poor. Violence and fights occurred with regular frequency in sailortown, between prostitutes, madams, and sailors. Sex workers, however, built a loose community in order to survive. Prostitution and managing brothels provided ways for women to often earn more money than legitimate employment, and gave women opportunities to run a business. Already in the public sphere, some madams did not fear breaking gender roles to protect prostitutes, collect money, and effectively manage a business.

New London, as a small seaport, distinguished itself from larger ports by having only a very working class prostitution sector that catered towards seamen specifically. Prosecuting prostitution at a time when many cities did not, New London tried to legally eradicate prostitution with its limited legal resources in the 1840s. The large contingent of African-American whalers in New London, and therefore, demand for black women, might explain the frequent arrests of African-American prostitutes not seen in other cities. Studying the relationship between seamen, prostitutes, and society demonstrates the discrepancies between Victorian views of sailortown life, and the actuality. In addition to exploring the lower-class sex industry in New London, this study also explores the relationship between prostitutes and seamen in the maritime world.

## *Epilogue*

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As a seaport and one of the major urban centers of Southeastern Connecticut, New London still attracts prostitutes and men looking for sex. With continuing maritime industries, some customers are Navy seamen. Organized brothels arose in New London during 1840s and 1850s when New London came into its own as a whaling port. Whaling declined, but the Civil War brought groups of young men to New London as soldiers. Prostitution continued to thrive. In fact, the city had to create a town-funded, night-watch policing force in the 1860s.<sup>201</sup> Previously, the sheriff and his men arrested lawbreakers and collected fines to provide themselves with an income. In 1864, the city and vice in it had grown so that New London created a regular police force, funded by the town, with eight men to keep order. However, in 1866, the town meeting voted that \$7,000 was too expensive to keep up the force, and disbanded the watch. In June 1868, in the face of excessive crime, the town decided to recreate the police force, and paid for a night watch.<sup>202</sup> Court records do not exist for this time period, however, or are not accessible.

In the late nineteenth century, New London police arrested brothel owners four times a year.<sup>203</sup> Released after paying a fine, the owners were in effect regulated and informally taxed. This kind of system was common in other late nineteenth-century cities. Accepting that prostitution could not be eradicated, and covertly admitting the industry was good for the local economy, fines became the price of doing business.<sup>204</sup> One salesman, traveling through New London at the turn of the last century noted, that New London had “the liveliest, most wide-open red-light district between New York and Boston.”<sup>205</sup> By 1912, the State’s Attorney of Connecticut, recognizing illicit prostitution occurring throughout the state,

requested that all towns eliminate their vice districts. The resulting raids temporarily closed many brothels.<sup>206</sup>

Bradly Street (see fig. 1), a major center for prostitution in the 1840s and 1850s, continued to be a hub of prostitution throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Eugene O'Neill visited Bradly Street brothels and bars, and referenced New London's houses of ill fame in his plays. Even one of his characters in *Long Day's Journey into Night* was based on Addie Burns, a New London brothel owner.<sup>207</sup> In the 1960s, the city of New London demolished Bradly Street and the surrounding neighborhood in an effort to revitalize the area.

Today, New London is one of the largest centers for prostitution in eastern Connecticut, along with Norwich and Willimantic. Streetwalking is common, with the highest concentration of prostitutes on Broad Street and in Hodges Square. Most women resort to prostitution today in New London to support drug habits. New London County also has a high amount of prostitution in local casinos.<sup>208</sup> Women from all classes find themselves addicted to drugs, and therefore, the streets have desperate woman from many backgrounds.<sup>209</sup> Ever the seaport community, the Naval base across the river from New London still supplies a good deal of seamen looking for sex.

## Tables

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TABLE 1. Arrests for Frequenting a House of Ill Fame, 1827 - 1852

Name	Arrested	Color	Conviction	Punishment (in dollar amount of fines or time in prison)
Hannah Baker	24 July 1828		Guilty	10 days
Catherine Beckwith	18 Sept. 1828		Guilty	5 days
Miranda Colvert	5 June 1845	white	Guilty	25 days
Defiah Comstock	27 May 1845		Guilty	
Minerva Capola	13 Aug. 1845		Guilty	
Emily Jenkins	18 Jan 1844		Guilty	
Mary Jones	27 May 1845		Guilty	
Mary Mason	24 July 1828		Guilty	8 days
Mary Prince	27 May 1845	Black	Guilty	
Betsy Rodgers	27 May 1845		Guilty	
Lucy Thaw	1845		Guilty	
Eliza Uncas	13 Aug. 1845	Black	Guilty	21 days
Lucretia Wheeler	18 Jan 1844		Guilty	
Lucretia Wheeler	8 April 1844		Guilty	15 days

*Sources:* *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, p. 328, RG 3, CT; Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

*Notes:* Individuals in this table who were convicted of their crime, but did not receive a punishment usually paid bail and then did not return for their sentencing.

TABLE 2. Arrests for Residing in a House of Ill Fame, 1827 - 1852

Name	Dated	Color	Conviction	Punishment (in dollar amount of fines or time in prison)	Brothel
Miranda Beckwith*	26 Dec. 1848	white	Guilty	\$25 and 2 months	
Laura Daniels	8 March 1848		Guilty		Hester Leonard
Lucinda Fowler	11 Feb. 1848	Colored	Guilty	\$25 and 3 months	Frank Sanson
Sophia Manuel	11 Feb. 1848		Guilty		Frank Sanson
Elizabeth Richards	11 Feb. 1848	Black	Guilty	\$25 and 3 months	Frank Sanson
Lucy Mason	1852		Guilty		Serepta Lewis
Sara Richards	11 Feb. 1848	Black	Guilty	\$15	Frank Sanson
Mary Slate	26 June 1843		Guilty	30 days	Henry and Mary Duffy

*Sources:* County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855, vol 34, p. 328, RG 3, CT; Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

*Notes:* Individuals in this table who were convicted of their crime, but did not receive a punishment usually paid bail and then did not return for their sentencing.

\* Miranda Colvert, listed second on Table 2, married William Beckwith to become Miranda Beckwith on June 11, 1845. Miranda Colvert is the daughter of Maranda Colbert listed in Table 3. *Source:* New London Vital Records, vol 77, p. 17, CT.



TABLE 3. Arrests for Maintaining a House of Ill Fame, 1827 - 1852

Name	Arrested	Color	Conviction	Punishment (in dollar amount of fines or time in prison)	Location
Clara Antone	27 Feb. 1847		Guilty		Bradly Street
Hannah Hide Billings	27 Sept. 1847	Black	Guilty		Potter Street
Maranda Colbert**	17 Sept. 1842		Not guilty		
Ledyard Colbert	17 Sept. 1842		Not guilty		
Andrew Colbert	17 Sept. 1842		Not guilty		
Henry Duffy	26 June 1843		Guilty	30 days	
Mary Duffy	26 June 1843		Guilty	30 days	
Sophia Joseph	9 Sept. 1852		Guilty	\$10	Potter Street
Israel King	16 Jan. 1844		Not guilty		
Jemima King	17 Sept. 1842		Guilty	\$50	
Jemima King	16 Jan. 1844		Guilty		Bradly Street
Jemima King	9 Sept. 1844		Guilty		
Jemima King	29 April 1844		Guilty		Bradly Street
Serepta Lewis (Galette)	27 Sept. 1852	Black	Guilty	\$50	Bradly Street
Mary Lopez*	23 Aug. 1849	Black	Guilty	\$50 and 6 months	Bank Street
Catharine Noyes	1843	Black	Guilty		
John Noyes	1843	Black	Guilty		
Anstus Van Dorus (Sanson)	26 June 1843		Guilty	\$25	
Frank Sanson	26 June 1843	Black	Guilty	\$25	
Frank Sanson	11 Feb 1848		Guilty	\$50	Water Street
Rebecca Simmons	17 Sept. 1842		Not guilty		
John Simmons	17 Sept. 1842		Not guilty		
Martha Wilson	June 1844		Guilty	\$50	

*Sources: County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855, vol 34, p. 328, RG 3, CT; Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; Turner's New London City Directory, For 1853-4 Containing Valuable Local Information for Citizens and Strangers (New London, Williams & Bacon, 1853); Barbara W. Brown and James M. Rose, Black Roots in Southeastern Connecticut, 1650-1900 (Detroit, Gale Research, 1980).*

*Notes:* Individuals in this table who were convicted of their crime, but did not receive a punishment usually paid bail and then did not return for their sentencing.

\*Mary Lopez was convicted of maintaining a house of ill fame and prostitution at this hearing.

\*\*Maranda Colbert is the mother of Miranda Colvert listed in Table 1 who is also Miranda Beckwith on Table

## *A Note on Sources*

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I began my research by looking through Newspapers and manuscripts at the New London Historical Society. This search provided me with sources invaluable to my thesis, such as the papers of the New London Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society, the Lewis Female Cent Society, almshouse records, city hall records, and the article by R.B. Wall in the *New London Day* detailing Mother King. I did not find diaries or letters of new London seamen as I had hoped, which might shed light on prostitution. Those materials were few, and were instead located at the G.B. Blunt White Library of Mystic Seaport. At the New London Historical Society and G.W. Blunt White Library, I did not find any names of people working in the prostitution industry in newspapers, letters, and charitable society records that I would need to begin in-depth research into the world of prostitution during New London's whaling era.

I next searched the court records of the New London County Court located in *County Court of New London Country Records of Trials, 1661 – 1855*, vol XXXII, XXXIII, XXXIV (Hartford: Connecticut State Library, 1922), and New London Justice of the Peace Courts, boxes 568-572, Record Group 3, which are both located in the Connecticut State Library History and Genealogy Unit. The County Court of New London County Court Records, which are only accessible to the public up until 1854, are indexed by the name of the trial. I studied all the records in which the state prosecuted a woman, noting all cases involving prostitution. The New London Justice of the Peace Courts files are not catalogued, and kept in five boxes in no particular order. I sorted through all the cases, reading those of

people I knew had some connection to the prostitution industry, and all cases in which the state prosecuted women from 1820 –1860.

After collecting names and court cases related to prostitution, I looked for the names in other records, such as the census, town vital records, and probate records. Barbara W. Brown and James M. Rose in *Black Roots in Southeastern Connecticut, 1650-1900* (Detroit, Gale Research, 1980) did this record linking process for African Americans in the area, and this book was helpful in finding more data on African-American prostitutes. I did not find any person related to prostitution in the Connecticut State Library's card catalogue of probate records. By linking sources together, I was able to recreate the lives prostitutes and brothel managers in New London to the fullest extent possible.

# Notes

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## Abbreviations

NLH	New London Historical Society, New London, Connecticut.
GWB	G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, Connecticut.
CT	History and Genealogy Unit, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Connecticut.

## Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Charles G. Jennings, *Recollections of New London of Seventy Years* (1921).

<sup>2</sup> Mary Lopez was her name at the time of the arrest. Her maiden name was Hewitt. She married George Craig in 1836, Antonio Lopez in 1849, and James Lee in 1854. Barbara W. Brown and James M. Rose, *Black Roots in Southeastern Connecticut, 1650-1900* (Detroit, Gale Research, 1980), 95.

<sup>3</sup> State vs Mary Lopez, 23 Aug. 1849, *Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT ; Jeffery Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1997), 187; *Sixth Census of the United States, 1840, Connecticut*, reel 29-30 (Washington D.C.: National Archives, 1967) microform; Brown, 95; *Turner's New London City Directory, For 1853-4 Containing Valuable Local Information for Citizens and Strangers* (New London, Williams & Bacon, 1853).

<sup>4</sup> Glenn Gordinier, "Evangelists, Landsharks, and the Character of Seamen's Benevolence in Nineteenth-Century America," *The Log of Mystic Seaport* (Summer 1991).

<sup>5</sup> By 1840, New London had 848 people employed in navigation of the oceans and rivers, by far the largest number of employed seamen of any port in Connecticut. New Haven, with the second most number of people employed in navigation of the oceans and rivers in Connecticut, only had 225 people working in this industry. *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Status of the United States* (Washington: Thomas Allen 1841; reprint, New York: Norman Ross, 1990).

## CHAPTER 1. THE DOUBLE STANDARD

<sup>6</sup> Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1980), 7.

<sup>7</sup> The "cult of domesticity" revolved around the idea that a woman's place was in the home and that she should make it a haven of morality, cleanliness, and femininity. Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale, 1977).

<sup>8</sup> *The New London Gazette and General Advertiser*, October 17 1838, NLH.

<sup>9</sup> John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 70.

<sup>10</sup> Shannon Bell, *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1994), 41.

<sup>11</sup> Papers of the Lewis Female Cent Society, 1 Jan 1810, vol 1, NLH.

<sup>12</sup> Robert L. Griswold, "Law, Sex, Cruelty, and Divorce in Victorian America, 1840-1900," *American Quarterly*, 38 (Winter, 1986): 721.

<sup>13</sup> For more on this subject, see page 49.

<sup>14</sup> William Acton, *Prostitution Considered in its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects in London and Other Large Cities and Garrison Towns* (1857) in Robert Bell, *Social Deviance: A Substantive Analysis* (Homewood, IL: Dorsey, 1976), 52.

- <sup>15</sup> "The Brothel," *The Liberator* (Boston), Oct 31 1835, in Accessible eArchive Search and Information Server [database on-line] (accessed 20 December 2004), item no. 12369.
- <sup>16</sup> Antoinette L. Brown, "Shadows of Our Social System," *Frederick Douglass Paper*, (Rochester, NY), Aug. 3, 1855, in Accessible eArchive Search and Information Server [database on-line] (accessed 20 December 2004), item no. 65417.
- <sup>17</sup> "A Beautiful Appeal," *The National Era* (Washington, D.C.), 1 March 1855, in Accessible eArchive Search and Information Server [database on-line] (accessed 20 December 2004), item no. 51784, p. 34.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> "Shadows of Our Social System."
- <sup>20</sup> Lisa Norling, "Jack Tar in Victorian America," *The Log of Mystic Seaport* (Winter, 1993): 72 - 74.
- <sup>21</sup> Nathaniel W. Taylor, *Life on a Whaler*, ed. Howard Palmer (Hartford, CT: Lockwood and Brainard, 1929), 19.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 49
- <sup>23</sup> New Bedford Port Society, *First Annual Report*, 1831 in Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab had a Wife : New England Women & the Whalefishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill, NC : University of North Carolina, 2000), 220.
- <sup>24</sup> Glenn Gordinier, "Evangelists, Landsharks, and the Character of Seamen's Benevolence in Nineteenth-Century America," *The Log of Mystic Seaport* (Summer 1991): 32 - 34, 35, 36.
- <sup>25</sup> *Sailor's Magazine* (August 1844): 294.
- <sup>26</sup> *Morning News* (New London), 12 Dec. 1844, 2.
- <sup>27</sup> *Constitution of the Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society of New London, Conn.* ( New London: EE. Darrow, Printer, Corgreen and Pearls ts, 1890), 1, NLH.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.
- <sup>29</sup> *Sailor's Magazine*, 1 (Sept. 1843): pg 14.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.
- <sup>31</sup> *Constitution Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society*, 7.
- <sup>32</sup> *Report of the Ladies Seamen's Friend Society of New London, Conn: July 1847* (New London: Bolles & Williams, 1847), NLH.
- <sup>33</sup> "From Report of the Secretary of the Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society of New London, for the year ending April 16, 1856," *Constitution of the Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society of New London, Conn.* (New London: EE. Darrow, Printer, Corgreen and Pearls ts, 1890) 1, NLH.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> *Turner's New London City Directory, For 1853-4 Containing Valuable Local Information for Citizens and Strangers* (New London, Williams & Bacon, 1853).
- <sup>37</sup> "Summary, 1890," Records of the Ladies Seamen's Friend Society, NLH.
- <sup>38</sup> "Summary, 1890," Records of the Ladies Seamen's Friend Society, NLH.
- <sup>39</sup> Gordinier, 34.
- <sup>40</sup> Frances Manwaring Caulkins, *History of New London, Connecticut: From the First Survey of the Coast in 1612, to 1860* (New London: Utley, 1895), 626.
- <sup>41</sup> "Account of dis orderly and Vagrants sent to Almshouse for correction since Last December 1804," 1805, NLH.
- <sup>42</sup> Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University, 1990), 19-21; Timothy Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex 1790-1920* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 182-184.
- <sup>43</sup> D'Emilio, 3-4.
- <sup>44</sup> Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (New York: Knopf 1986), 171.
- <sup>45</sup> Marilynn Wood Hill, *Their Sister's Keepers: Prostitution in New York City, 1830-1870* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), 113.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 114
- <sup>47</sup> Gilfoyle, 125.
- <sup>48</sup> Flora Tristan, *The London Journal of Flora Tristan*, trans Jean Hawkes (Virago, 1982), 83-87 from Trevor Fisher, *Prostitution and the Victorians* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), xxiv - xviii.
- <sup>49</sup> Hill, 24.

<sup>50</sup> Joel Best, *Controlling Vice: Regulating Brothel Prostitution in St. Paul 1865-1883* (Columbus: Ohio State, 1998).

<sup>51</sup> Best, 18-20.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Warren Capen, Ph.d., *The Historical Development of Poor Law in Connecticut* (New York: Columbia, 1905), 149-152.

<sup>53</sup> Title 20 Sec. 65, *The Public Statute Laws of the State of Connecticut as Revised by the General Assembly in May 1824*. (Hartford: H. Huntington jr., 1824)

<sup>54</sup> State vs Miranda Beckwith, 7 Nov. 1847, *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, p. 328, RG 3, CT.

<sup>55</sup> Title 111 Sec.7, *The Public Statute Laws of the State of Connecticut as Revised by the General Assembly in May 1824*. (Hartford: H. Huntington jr., 1824).

<sup>56</sup> See Table 2.

<sup>57</sup> Capen, 225.

<sup>58</sup> Caulkins, 666.

<sup>59</sup> Calculated from *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Status of the United States* (Washington: Thomas Allen 1841; reprint, New York: Norman Ross, 1990);

<sup>60</sup> Title VII Sec. 87, *The Revised Statutes of the State of Connecticut* (Hartford: Tiffany, 1846).

<sup>61</sup> Capen, 150.

<sup>62</sup> *The Slave's Cry* (New London), 30 March 1854.

<sup>63</sup> I was not able to discern the total number of males arrested for sleeping with prostitutes. In order to find prostitution cases in the court records, which were not indexed by crime, I looked through all the criminal cases against women. Any cases against men I came across by chance. Finding all the cases against men for soliciting prostitutes would involve further research. State vs Mathew Loops, 26 Sept. 1850, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

## CHAPTER 2. TRANSIENT SEAMEN AND WOMEN

<sup>64</sup> Lisa Norling, "Jack Tar in Victorian America," *The Log of Mystic Seaport* (Winter 1993): 73.

<sup>65</sup> William Sanger, MD, *The History of Prostitution: It's Extent, Causes, and Effects Through the World: Being an Official Report to the Board of Alms-House Governors of the City of New York* ( New York: Harper & Bros, 1859), 562.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 562.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 458.

<sup>68</sup> Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab had a Wife: New England Women & the Whalefishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill, NC : University of North Carolina, 2000), 220.

<sup>69</sup> Robert Owen Decker, *The Whaling City: A History of New London* (Chester, CT: The Pequot Press, 1876), 118.

<sup>70</sup> *Morning News* (New London), 12 Dec 1844, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Frances Manwaring Caulkins, *History of New London, Connecticut: From the First Survey of the Coast in 1612, to 1860* (New London: Utley, 1895), 646.

<sup>72</sup> "Lists Surrendered 1847-1850" *New London Customs Records Crew* (National Archives Microfilm).

<sup>73</sup> Nathaniel W. Taylor, *Life on a Whaler*, ed. Howard Palmer (Hartford, CT: Lockwood and Brainard, 1929), 16.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>75</sup> Robert Owen Decker, *The Whaling City: A History of New London* (Chester, CT: The Pequot Press, 1876), 167.

<sup>76</sup> Mary Malloy, "The Sailor's Fantasy: Images of Women in the Songs of the American Whaleman," *The Log of Mystic Seaport* (Summer 1997): 34 - 43.

<sup>77</sup> Letter from Jestin Martin to Charles Martin, Nov 29, 1844, Manuscripts Whaling Collection, GWB, in Decker, 89.

<sup>78</sup> David Cordingly, "Introduction," *Women Sailors and Sailor's Women: An Untold Maritime History* (New York: Random House, 2001), xii.

<sup>79</sup> William Lord Stevens, *Journal 1849-1850*, Manuscripts Collection, GWB.

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- <sup>80</sup> Cordingly, 160.
- <sup>81</sup> *Saucy Sally*, rudder-head, accession no. 49.3359, GWB.
- <sup>82</sup> Fo'c'stle is the term seamen use for forecandle, the cramped area below deck in the front of the ship where the common seamen sleep.
- <sup>83</sup> Sodomy is the term used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for acts of homosexuality.
- <sup>84</sup> Suzanne J. Stark, *Female Tars* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute, 1996), 1-14, 42, 62, 112.
- <sup>85</sup> Bolster, 170.
- <sup>86</sup> Cordingly, 181.
- <sup>87</sup> The word shanty is also spelt chantey, and is an English corruption of the French word *chanter* imper. of *chanter*, to sing. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/>> (12 Dec. 2004), *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- <sup>88</sup> "Black Ball Line," in Frederick Pease Harlow, *Chanteying Aboard American Ships* (Barre, MA: Barre Gazette, 1962), 104. The shanties in this book are all songs Harlow learned while a sailor in the 1870s.
- <sup>89</sup> "Early in the Morning," in *Ibid.*, 107.
- <sup>90</sup> "South Australia," in *Ibid.*, 33.
- <sup>91</sup> She-oak is a strong Australian alcoholic drink. *Ibid.*, 33.
- <sup>92</sup> "South Australia," in *Ibid.*, 33.
- <sup>93</sup> "A Rovin'," in Stan Hugill, *Shanties from the Seven Seas* (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1994), 46-47. Hugill was an internationally renowned expert of sea songs, collecting shanties while working for the Royal Navy and merchant marine from 1921-1950. In the 1970's he became renowned for his skills as a shanty man.
- <sup>94</sup> "A Rovin'," in *Ibid.*, 47-48.
- <sup>95</sup> "A Rovin'," in *Ibid.*, 46-47.
- <sup>96</sup> "The Fire Ship," is in Hugill, 138-139. However, Hugill omitted the cited stanza because of its graphic sexual content. This stanza is included at, *The Mudcat Café*, <<http://www.mudcat.org/@displaysong.cfm?SongID=6285>> (12 Dec. 2004).
- <sup>97</sup> "A Rovin'," in Hugill, 46-47.
- <sup>98</sup> "The Gals O' Dublin Town," Hugill, 112.
- <sup>99</sup> "Rio Grande," in Hugill, 85.
- <sup>100</sup> "The Planes of Mexico," in Hugill, 78.
- <sup>101</sup> "A Long Time Ago," in Hugill, 88.
- <sup>102</sup> "Rio Grande," in Hugill, 85.
- <sup>103</sup> Bracebridge Hemyng, "Prostitution in London," in Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and The London Poor: Those that Will not Work* (London: Griffin, Bohn, 1862): 230.
- <sup>104</sup> "A Rovin'," in Hugill, 45.
- <sup>105</sup> "Liza Lee," in *Ibid.*, 74.
- <sup>106</sup> "The Whalemen's Wives," in Harlow, 233.
- <sup>107</sup> "Outward Bound," in *Ibid.*, 137.
- <sup>108</sup> "New York Girls," ed. John Roberts and Tony Barrand, *The Mudcat Café*, <<http://www.mudcat.org/@displaysong.cfm?SongID=4216>> (15 Sept. 2004).
- <sup>109</sup> Mary Malloy, 38.
- <sup>110</sup> "The Fire Ship" in Hugill, 138. The last four lines of this quote were omitted from the book due to their licentiousness, and are found at "Fireship," *The Mudcat Café*, <<http://www.mudcat.org/@displaysong.cfm?SongID=6285>> (14 Sept. 2004).
- <sup>111</sup> "Pills of White Mercury," *The Mudcat Café*, <<http://www.mudcat.org/@displaysong.cfm?SongID=4684>> (15 Nov. 2004). This shanty is derived from a 1795 ballad. It has a sister cowboy ballad carried into the western united states by seamen called "The Streets of Laredo" that places the song in the context of the American West. See *Songs of The Cowboys*, ed. N. Howard Thorp (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1921), 41.
- <sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>113</sup> Mary Spongberg, *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century Medical Discourse* (New York: New York University, 1997), 1-6.
- <sup>114</sup> J.C. Riley, *Materia Medica and Therapeutica* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott, 1876).
- <sup>115</sup> "Rolling King" in Hugill, 150.
- <sup>116</sup> Stevens.

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### CHAPTER 3. PROSTITUTES, MADAMS, AND FANCY MEN

<sup>117</sup> Frances Manwaring Caulkins, *History of New London, Connecticut: From the First Survey of the Coast in 1612, to 1860* (New London: Utley, 1895), 246.

<sup>118</sup> Robert Owen Decker, *The Whaling City: A History of New London* (Chester, CT: The Pequot Press, 1876), 118.

<sup>119</sup> State vs Clara Antone, Sept. 1847, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG3, CT; State v Serepta Lewis (Gaulette), 27 Sept. 1852, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; *Turner's New London City Directory, For 1853-4 Containing Valuable Local Information for Citizens and Strangers* (New London, Williams & Bacon, 1853); Brown 227, 475. State vs Laura Daniels March 8, 1848; *Plan of the City of New London New London County, Connecticut from Original Surveys* (Philadelphia: Collins & Clark, 1850).

<sup>120</sup> Sanger's study, for example, was conducted by police officers, possibly tainting their answers. Although two thousand prostitutes were interviewed in total, they were well known individuals or those who frequented brothels. Few streetwalkers or child prostitutes were interviewed. Women who prostituted themselves while holding a respectable profession would have been ignored as well. William Sanger, M.D., *The History of Prostitution: It's Extent, Causes, and Effects Through the World: Being an Official Report to the Board of Alms-House Governors of the City of New York* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1859), 26- 33.

<sup>121</sup> This statistic is compiled from the following statistics: 4 % cited bad company and 3.5% said they were persuaded by prostitutes.

<sup>122</sup> For more on Miranda Colvert, see page 77. State vs Miranda Colvert, 6 Dec. 1845, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

<sup>123</sup> Sanger, 488, 539, 544.

<sup>124</sup> State vs Minerva Capola, 13 Aug 1845, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Minerva Capola, 8 Sept. 1847, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

<sup>125</sup> State vs Carolyn Hyde, Sept. 17 1852, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG3, CT.

<sup>126</sup> William Lord Stevens, *Journal*, 1849-1850, Manuscripts Collection, GWB.

<sup>127</sup> Sanger, 488, 539, 544.

<sup>128</sup> Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780- 1835* (New Haven: Yale, 1977), 6.

<sup>129</sup> Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 13.

<sup>130</sup> *Turner's New London City Directory, For 1853-4 Containing Valuable Local Information for Citizens and Strangers* (New London, Williams & Bacon, 1853).

<sup>131</sup> Timothy Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex 1790-1920* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 61.

<sup>132</sup> *The Seventh Census of the United States 1850* (Washington D. C.: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853, reprinted, NY: Norman Ross, 1990).

<sup>133</sup> "People of color" includes all free people who were not considered white.

<sup>134</sup> Sanger, 625.

<sup>135</sup> Marilyn Wood Hill, *Their Sister's Keepers: Prostitution in New York City, 1830-1870* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), 55-57.

<sup>136</sup> *The Seventh Census 1850*.

<sup>137</sup> Jeffery Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1997), 164 - 169.

<sup>138</sup> William D. Piersen, *Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth Century New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1988), 87-89.

<sup>139</sup> Bolster, 177.

<sup>140</sup> Frank Sanson's brothel consisted of entirely African American women, as did Serepta Lewis' brothel.

<sup>141</sup> Ruth Wallis Herndon, *Unwelcome Americans: Living on the Margin in Early New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001), 2- 10; Edward Warren Capen, Ph.d., "Laws of Settlement," *The Historical Development of the Poor Law of Connecticut* (New York: Columbia, 1905), 69-77.



- <sup>142</sup> Barbara W. Brown and James M. Rose, *Black Roots in Southeastern Connecticut, 1650-1900* (Detroit, Gale Research, 1980), 271.
- <sup>143</sup> Brown, 240.
- <sup>144</sup> State vs Hannah Billings, 27 Sept. 1847, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG3, CT; Brown, 29.
- <sup>145</sup> Brown, 29.
- <sup>146</sup> Michael Goldberg, "Breaking New Ground: 1800 – 1848," *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States*, ed Nancy Cott (New York: Oxford, 2000), 180-182; Linda Kerber, "'Domestic Liberty': Freedom to Divorce," *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina, 1980), 157 – 183.
- <sup>147</sup> State vs Elizabeth Richards, case 302, 11 Feb. 1848, *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT; State vs Sara Richards, case 302, 11 Feb. 1848, *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT; Brown, 342; Laura Ann Davis married James Kellogg alias James Richards, 1 Sept. 1822, Colchester Vital Records, vol 2, p. 94.
- <sup>148</sup> Gilfoyle 164, 171, 172.
- <sup>149</sup> Hill, 94.
- <sup>150</sup> John Hooker, "Alexander McAlister, Treasurer of the City of New Haven vs. Massena Clark," Supreme Court of Errors, *Connecticut Reports*, 33 (Hartford: Lockwood, 1867), 91.
- <sup>151</sup> Box 568 - 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.
- <sup>152</sup> *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT; Box 568 - 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.
- <sup>153</sup> Hill, 94.
- <sup>154</sup> *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT.
- <sup>155</sup> State vs Jemima King, John Simmons, Rebecca Simmons, Ledyard Colbert, Maranda Colbert and Andrew Colbert, 17 Sept. 1842, box 568, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG3, CT; State vs Jemima King, 18 Jan. 1844, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG3, CT; State vs Jemima King, 9 April 1844, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG3, CT.
- <sup>156</sup> R. B. Wall, "Historic Places: Truman's Brook and Vicinity," *New London Day*, 28 Feb. 1916.
- <sup>157</sup> Grantee Grantor Records, New London Town Hall, New London, Connecticut; *New London City Directory*.
- <sup>158</sup> The death of a man behind Mother King's establishment could explain the harsh punishments the New London Justice of the Peace dealt to the real Jemima King in 1844, encouraging her to end her illicit business.
- <sup>159</sup> Wall.
- <sup>160</sup> Brown, 360.
- <sup>161</sup> Peggy vs Antoine De Saint, 1840, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Frank Sanson, 1838, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.
- <sup>162</sup> Petition of Peggy Sanson, 27 Aug 1840, Connecticut Superior Court, File Papers, New London Dist., CT.
- <sup>163</sup> Only one in every one thousand married couples divorced before the Civil War. Goldberg, 180-182.
- <sup>164</sup> Goldberg, 180-182; Kerber, 157 – 183.
- <sup>165</sup> Smith and Cady vs Peggy Sanson, 21 Jan 1842, box 568, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.
- <sup>166</sup> De Saint later traveled to California during the gold rush and returned New London to open a barber shop and a grocery in 1860. Fred Calabretta "The Picture of Antoine De Saint" *The Log of Mystic Seaport* (Spring, 2002). Peggy vs Antoine De Saint, 1840, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.
- <sup>167</sup> Brown, 360.
- <sup>168</sup> State vs Frank Sanson and Anstus Van Dorus, 26 June 1843, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.
- <sup>169</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>170</sup> State vs Elizabeth Richards, case 302, 11 Feb. 1848, *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT; State vs Lucinda Fowler, case 361, 11 Feb. 1848, *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT; State vs Sarah Richards, 11 Feb. 1848, *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT; Case 668, Feb 11 1848, box 68, New London County Court Files, RG 3, CT;
- <sup>171</sup> State vs Frank Sanson, Feb 11 1848, *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT.

<sup>172</sup> State vs Frank Sanson, 10 Nov. 1848, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; Brown, 360.

<sup>173</sup> State vs Sarah Jeffery, 13 July 1810, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

<sup>174</sup> State vs Mary Prince, Mary Jone alias Thompson, Betsy Rodgers, 27 May 1845, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; Brown, 269; State vs John Brussel and Charles Freeman, 27 June 1844, *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT.

<sup>175</sup> Gilfoyle, 89; Hill, 9 – 136.

<sup>176</sup> “Shocking Murder,” *The New London Gazette and General Advertiser*, 20 April 1836.

<sup>177</sup> Both “fancy men” and “pimps” were terms used during the Victorian era to describe the men who worked in brothels and the men who managed, protected, and/or exploited individual women. Gilfoyle, 89.

<sup>178</sup> Gilfoyle, 89.

<sup>179</sup> Gilfoyle, 88-89.

<sup>180</sup> State vs Minerva Capola, 13 March 1844, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Mary Prince, Mary Jone alias Thompson, Betsy Rodgers, 27 May 1845, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Lucretia Wheeler and Emily Jenkins Jan. 44, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Jemima King, 18 Jan. 1844, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Jemima King, 29 April 1844, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT;

<sup>181</sup> State vs Mathew Loops, 26 Sept. 1850, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Ellen Phillips, 27 July 1847, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

<sup>182</sup> Hill, 295.

<sup>183</sup> State vs Ellen Phillips, 27 July 1847, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Hannah Billings, 4 Jan 1848, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Sophia Manuel, 11 Feb 1848, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

<sup>184</sup> State vs Clara Antone, 17 Sept. 1852, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Serepta Lewis, 17 Sept. 1852, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Clara Antone, Sept 1847, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

<sup>185</sup> State vs Rachel Lee, 1847, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

<sup>186</sup> Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab had a Wife: New England Women and the Whalefishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina).

<sup>187</sup> Sanger, 17.

<sup>188</sup> State vs Martha Butler (Wilson), June 1844, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs Laura Daniels, 8 March 1848, box 572, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

<sup>189</sup> Sanger, 481.

<sup>190</sup> Sanger, 475.

<sup>191</sup> Brown, 297; *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT.

<sup>192</sup> Brown, 342.

<sup>193</sup> Eliza Uncas married James A. Simpson, Dec 24 1863, Brown, 417; Miranda Colvert married William Beckwith, 11 June 1845, New London Vital Records, vol 77, p. 17, CT; Miranda Beckwith married Henry Beckwith, 9 Nov. 1847, New London Vital Records, vol 77, p. 19; Ann Pennyman married William Howard of New Bedford, 9 Sept. 1850, New London Vital Records, vol 4, p. 155; Ann Pennyman married James Thompson 24 June 1858, Brown 297; Mary Mason married Richard Allen, 23 Sept 1827, Groton Vital Records, vol 1, p. 24, CT; Mary Hewitt married George Craig on 4 Feb. 1836, Antonio Lopez on 23 Aug. 1849, and James Lee on 31 July 1854, Brown, 95.

<sup>194</sup> Brown, 297.

<sup>195</sup> Preston had many prostitution cases in the New London County Court Records. Brown, 417; State vs Eliza Uncas, 13 Aug. 1845, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT.

<sup>196</sup> Maranda and Ledyard spelled their last name Colbert, while Miranda is recorded with the name Colvert. However, the following court record names Maranda and Ledyard as her parents. State vs Miranda Colvert, Dec 1844, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; <sup>7<sup>th</sup></sup> *Census, 1850 Connecticut, New London County (part)* reel #49, *The National Archives of the United States* (Microfilm,

1934); State vs Maranda Colbert, case 344, Sept 1847, *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT.

<sup>197</sup> State vs Miranda Colvert, 1845, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG3, CT; William Beckwith married Miranda Colvert, June 11, 1845, New London Vital Records, vol 77, p. 17, CT; *7<sup>th</sup> Census, 1850 Connecticut*; State vs William Beckwith, 1 May 1845, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT; State vs William Beckwith, June 1845, box 569, Justice of the Peace Courts, New London, 1763-1892, RG 3, CT;

<sup>198</sup> State vs Miranda Beckwith, 7 Nov. 1847, *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, p. 328, RG 3, CT; Henry Beckwith married Miranda Beckwith, 19 Nov. 1847, New London Vital Records, vol 77, p. 16, CT; *7<sup>th</sup> Census, 1850 Connecticut*.

<sup>199</sup> *7<sup>th</sup> Census, 1850 Connecticut*;

<sup>200</sup> State vs Miranda Beckwith, case 422, 26 Dec 1848, , *County Court of New London County Record of Trials, 1661-1855*, vol 34, RG 3, CT; *7<sup>th</sup> Census, 1850 Connecticut*.

## EPILOGUE

<sup>201</sup> R.B. Wall, "Inception and Development of New London's Police Department," *The New London Day*, 11 July 1912.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Joel Best, *Controlling Vice: Regulating Brothel Prostitution in St. Paul 1865-1883* (Columbus: Ohio State, 1998).

<sup>205</sup> Louis Schaeffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), 59, in Robert Richter, *Touring Eugene O'Neill's New London* (Louis Schaeffer-Eugene O'Neill Collection, Shain Library, Connecticut College, 2001), 3;

<sup>206</sup> Wall "Police Department."

<sup>207</sup> *Touring Eugene O'Neill's New London*, ed Richard Pickering (Louis Schaeffer-Eugene O'Neill Collection, Shain Library, Connecticut College, 2001);

<sup>208</sup> Penelope Overton, "Escort Service May Prove Costly: Man Charged with Running Expensive Prostitution Business in State" *The Hartford Courant*, 31 Oct. 2000; "Resident Charged with Prostitution: East Lyme Police News" *The Hartford Courant*, 22 Nov. 1995; "Alleged Prostitutes Service Foxwoods Patrons" *Norwich Bulletin*, 1 March 2002.

<sup>209</sup> Mark Braunstein, *Good Girls, Bad Drugs* (working paper, 2005).